Policy on the Evaluation of Learning

GENERAL EDUCATION IN THE YOUTH SECTOR

GENERAL EDUCATION IN THE ADULT SECTOR

VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Reach for your Dreams

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Evaluation of learning at the service of students

It is the Québec government's aim to reorient the efforts of the education system so that they are centred on students, who are, after all, its prime focus. I am therefore pleased to present the *Policy on the Evaluation of Learning*, in particular because it encourages us to make better use of evaluation and ensure that it is at the service of students. While respecting each sector's specific characteristics, the policy presents a unified vision of evaluation of learning for general education in the youth sector, general education in the adult sector and vocational training.

The orientations and guidelines presented in this policy will enable teachers, as well as the education community in general, to gain a common understanding of the reasons for updating evaluation practices. They will also help parents understand why and how their children's learning is evaluated at school.

The policy promotes greater integration of evaluation into educational activities, thereby fostering the full development of students, providing an overall perspective on their progress and contributing to the recognition of their competencies. This form of evaluation is essential to helping students learn better.

Schools and centres are already applying a range of appropriate evaluation methods. The policy seeks to consolidate and generalize these practices, while also encouraging educational institutions to explore new avenues to take into account, among other things, an educational reform that emphasizes the development of competencies.

An implementation plan has been devised to ensure the success of this policy. This plan describes the actions that the Ministere de l'Education will take to help schools and school boards meet the important challenge of providing evaluation that supports learning.

I ask that teachers and the different educational stakeholders become familiar with the orientations of the *Policy on the Evaluation of Learning*, so that it may truly serve its purpose of contributing to student success. In this way, the policy will provide an additional source of support to young people and adults in realizing their dreams.

Minister of Education

Pierre Reid

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Introduction

For several years, the Ministere de l'Education has been undertaking important reforms to general education in the youth and adult sectors. In vocational training, the reform implemented in 1986 is still in effect. The goal of these reforms is essentially to ensure the educational success of the greatest number of students possible. Updating the curriculum, which is a central focus of these reforms, has brought about significant changes in these sectors, both in terms of content and school organization. The evaluation of learning has also been influenced because it is an essential component of the curriculum. These reforms have also been accompanied by legislative and regulatory modifications. In particular, the *Education Act* provides greater powers to the main stakeholders in educational institutions. At the same time, the Ministere de l'Education has adopted the *Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training*, the special education policy *Adapting Our Schools to the Needs of All Students* and the *Policy Statement on Educational Integration and Intercultural Education*.

In the wake of these changes, the Ministere de l'Education is adopting this policy, which explains its vision of evaluation of learning. This policy is essential in situating the evaluation of learning in terms of the promotion of educational success for all. The Ministere's vision of evaluation is part of the changes already taking place with teaching and evaluation practices in the education community.

This policy reflects the consensus of all those concerned with the evaluation of learning. It is the result of a number of consultations with the Ministere's partners. It first explains the need to update the 1981 policy, the objectives pursued and the scope of application. It then establishes a common vision of the evaluation of learning for general education in the youth sector, general education in the adult sector and vocational training. This vision is reflected by the values and orientations set out in this policy as well as by the purposes and process of evaluation. Lastly, the specific characteristics of evaluation in each sector are described so that the needs of the students and partners may be taken into consideration.

A variety of means will be required to support the implementation of the *Policy on the Evaluation of Learning*. This is why the policy is accompanied by an implementation plan that deals with the strategies and measures chosen by the Ministere to apply it. These strategies and measures take into account the concerns and needs expressed by numerous individuals and organizations consulted on the draft policy. The assistance and support provided to the education community are major components of the *Implementation Plan*. Other strategies specify the changes that the Ministere will make to regulations and to the administrative and technological environment. This plan also indicates how the Ministere will ensure that its partners take the policy into account and that the policy is implemented effectively and updated regularly.

A COMMON VISION OF EVALUATION OF LEARNING

Evaluation is the process whereby a judgment is made on a student's learning on the basis of information gathered, analyzed and interpreted, for the purpose of making pedagogical and administrative decisions.

Evaluation applies to the learning provided under the programs in general education in the youth sector, general education in the adult sector and vocational training. Learning is described in terms of competencies to be developed. The different definitions of "competency" vary to a certain degree according to the sector involved, but they do include certain common elements. A competency is the capacity to carry out activities or tasks by drawing on a variety of resources, including knowledge, skills, strategies, techniques, attitudes and perceptions. Thus, for the purposes of this policy, the evaluation of competencies involves all of these resources.

The adoption of the *Policy on the Evaluation of Learning* by the Ministere de l'Education reflects its desire to officially communicate its vision of evaluation for general education in the youth sector, general education in the adult sector and vocational training. This vision, which is based on a comprehensive conception of evaluation of learning, is consistent with the mission of Quebec schools, which is to provide instruction, socialize and provide qualifications. Therefore, this first part of the policy presents the values, orientations and certain characteristics of evaluation that will serve as common guidelines for the three sectors of education.

Chapter 1: Overview of the Situation

1.1 The Need for a New Policy on the Evaluation of Learning

A unified policy: a comprehensive conception of evaluation and characteristics specific to each sector

Until the publication of this policy, no document presented the Ministere's unified vision of the evaluation of learning for the three sectors of education: general education in the youth sector, general education in the adult sector and vocational training. Over the years, documents have dealt with evaluation in terms of specific clienteles or a particular sector of education. In 1981, the *General Policy for Educational Evaluation for Preschool, Elementary and Secondary Schools* was adopted but dealt only with general education in the youth sector. In vocational training, in the wake of the 1986 reform, a number of documents on the evaluation of learning were published, including the *General Evaluation Guide*. The special education policy *Adapting Our Schools to the Needs of All Students*, adopted in 2000, set out a basic orientation and six lines of action, including one to evaluate the educational success of students with handicaps or with learning or adjustment difficulties. Over the past ten years, a series of guides and information documents on specific aspects of evaluation in adult education have also been published, including the document *Acquis scolaire* and the *Guide d'élaboration des instruments d'évaluation sommative à l'education des adultes*. The recent *Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training* deals with the recognition of prior learning. In all these documents, evaluation of learning is covered only in terms of specific situations, without necessarily highlighting the shared philosophy on which it is based. In this policy, the Ministere de l'Éducation conveys the need for evaluation of learning that stems from the same comprehensive conception, but that also takes into account specific aspects related to evaluation in each sector of education and other levels of education.

Evaluation that takes into account changes to the curriculum

There are also other reasons for adopting a policy on the evaluation of learning. They concern the changes introduced successively in the curriculum of each sector to reflect new thinking regarding instruction and learning. The education programs for general education in the youth and adult sectors, as well as the programs of study in vocational training will now be based on the development of competencies. These changes will have a number of consequences for evaluation practices, in particular by necessitating adjustments to meet the needs of competency-based evaluation.

Evaluation that takes into account organizational and legislative changes

The introduction of cycles in the youth sector has also had an impact on the evaluation of learning. Moreover, the *Education Act* has considerably increased the autonomy of schools, vocational training centres and adult education centres with respect to the choices they may make to adapt evaluation to their respective situations. Guidelines are therefore required to support school personnel and ensure the quality of evaluation practices.

Evolving evaluation approaches

Finally, it should be remembered that the theoretical bases of evaluation approaches have evolved considerably in the last few years, and different education systems, including Québec's, have sought to update their practices in light of these changes.

Although adaptations to evaluation practices are warranted because of various contextual elements, these adaptations are in line with the vision of evaluation of learning set out in the 1981 policy, especially in that they emphasize evaluation in the course of learning. The *Policy on the Evaluation of Learning* therefore builds on what is already taking place in numerous school environments and is an invitation to continue improving evaluation practices.

1.2 The Objectives of the *Policy on the Evaluation of Learning*

In adopting a policy on the evaluation of learning, the Ministere de l'Education is pursuing the following objectives:

to specify the Ministere's vision of evaluation of learning by presenting:

- the elements common to general education in the youth sector, general education in the adult sector and vocational training, especially the values, orientations and conceptual foundations
- the characteristics of evaluation of learning that are specific to each sector of education

to clarify the responsibilities of those involved in evaluation

1.3 The Scope of Application and Target Audience of the *Policy on the Evaluation of Learning*

The policy applies to general education in the youth sector, general education in the adult sector and vocational training. It concerns all students, regardless of their specific needs, their abilities (students with handicaps, at-risk students, students experiencing difficulties) or the places where they received training (school, home, business, etc.). The focus is on the learning requirements prescribed in the education programs for the youth and adult sectors and in the programs of study for vocational training.

This policy covers evaluation in all its dimensions: evaluation in the course of learning and at the end of a learning period, evaluation for the certification of studies and evaluation for the recognition of prior learning. Although the policy deals mainly with the evaluation of learning, it also briefly considers evaluation as an adjustment mechanism for the education system.

This policy is intended firstly for the individuals and organizations involved in the evaluation of learning and whose responsibilities have been specified in the legal framework. It also guides the actions of the individuals and organizations that work with students who receive all or part of their education outside a school setting. In the latter case, guidelines for the evaluation activities of these individuals and organizations are set out in a few sections of this policy. See Orientation 6, in particular.

The policy provides information for students in the three sectors of education, parents (in the case of minors), and governing boards. It is also of concern to those responsible for college and university education and teachers at these levels who deal with secondary school graduates. All those providing initial and in-service training to school personnel are also affected by the policy. Lastly, the boards of directors of private schools and organizations that contribute to the mission of educational institutions or delivery of certain programs may find useful information in the policy.

Chapter 2: Values

Values as an essential foundation for quality evaluation

The values outlined in this policy are the result of social consensus. They are of vital importance in Quebec's education system, which strives to provide equal opportunities and to ensure success for all students. Three fundamental values — justice, equality and equity — as well as three instrumental values — coherence, rigour and openness — have been retained.

These values are an essential foundation for the practices of all those involved in the evaluation of learning. It is important that they be adhered to so as to ensure that no one is put at a disadvantage in the evaluation process.

2.1 Fundamental Values

Justice

The evaluation of learning must take place in keeping with the statutes and regulations governing Quebec's education system. In conformity with justice, students have the right to retake examinations and lodge appeals. However, it is up to educational institutions to decide on the manner of applying these rights, taking into account their organizational constraints. Fair evaluation is also conditional upon the equality and equity of the evaluation process.

Equality

Equality requires above all that all students have an equal opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned. To respect this value, standard requirements must be defined. The education programs and programs of study set out, in the same way for all students, the expected outcomes as well as the evaluation criteria. On the basis of these benchmarks, it is possible to ensure equality both in terms of how students are educated and any judgments on their learning. However, equal treatment does not completely guarantee the fairness of the evaluation process. Students must also be guaranteed equitable treatment.

Equity

Equity requires that evaluation practices take into account the individual characteristics of certain students or the common traits of certain groups to ensure that evaluation does not contribute to increasing existing differences. Bias of any kind leading to advantages or disadvantages for certain students must not be introduced.

Interaction among the values of justice, equality and equity

The values of justice, equality and equity are in constant interaction. Thus, there can be no justice in the evaluation of learning unless equality and equity are ensured. Each student must be able to demonstrate the development of his or her competencies.

The adaptation of evaluation is necessary in certain situations.

Thus, a student with a visual impairment is treated in accordance with his or her rights and obligations (justice) if he or she writes the same examination as other students (equality) and if he or she is given a copy of the examination in Braille (equity). Similarly, a student with language difficulties may receive help in reading about the tasks that he or she is required to carry out in a mathematics evaluation situation. The environment of a student who has attention problems may be modified to help him or her concentrate better. Adaptations may also be made for immigrant students who do not have sufficient mastery of the language, for students who are ill and for students who are experiencing personal or family difficulties. Situations such as these in which it may be justified to adapt evaluation are provided as examples.

For certain students who receive their education outside a school setting, evaluation practices may sometimes need to be adapted. It is, however, up to the schools and school boards—whose responsibilities are set out in the legal framework—to determine the conditions and manner of this adaptation by taking into account, among other things, their organizational constraints.

Guidelines for the adaptation of evaluation conditions must be provided in all cases. The adaptation must, for example, be planned in an individualized education plan, in collaboration with the student, parents and educators concerned, when it is decided that these measures are necessary to allow the student to demonstrate the development of his or her competencies.

The importance of the competence of teachers in evaluation

Achieving the right balance among the values of justice, equality and equity depends in large part on the judgment of the teachers who evaluate learning. Although teachers have access to the same references, there are no official rules that guarantee that their practices are in conformity with the values underlying evaluation. In these circumstances, and given the responsibilities that fall on teachers, we cannot overemphasize the importance of developing and maintaining their competence in the evaluation of learning by means of initial or in-service training.

2.2 Instrumental Values

Coherence

Coherence requires that evaluation of learning be consistent with the school's mission as defined in the education policy statement *Québec Schools on Course*, that is, to provide instruction, socialize and provide qualifications. Coherence also means that evaluation must be directly tied to learning and to the program that structures it. For each of the sectors, all of the elements set out in the education programs and programs of study, including the competencies and knowledge, the expected outcomes and the evaluation criteria, must be taken into account. Coherence also requires that a close connection exist between what is being evaluated and the focus of learning. In this sense, respecting coherence ensures the validity of the evaluation. For students with specific needs, respecting this value means that evaluation of learning is based on the individualized education plan.

Rigour

Rigour is reflected in evaluation that is concerned with accuracy and precision. It is supported by a formal or informal procedure, depending on the situation. The use of quality instruments to gather information on learning and interpret it contributes to ensuring the reliability of the evaluation. The information gathered must be relevant and in sufficient quantity if an opinion is to be given on a student's learning. A rigorous evaluation must lead to the most accurate judgments possible so that decisions and actions may be taken that will help the student progress, will provide guidance on the appropriate path and will officially recognize learning.

Openness

Openness in evaluation is needed because it contributes to establishing the credibility of the education system in the eyes of society. This is why the Ministere's intentions with regard to the evaluation of learning and the mechanisms that allow these intentions to be realized must be known. Moreover, the Ministere publishes the results obtained on the uniform examinations for each cohort of students in general education in the youth sector.

Openness also requires that evaluation standards and conditions be known and understood by all. Students must know what they will be evaluated on and what is expected of them, and they must understand the judgments and decisions that concern them. Evaluation to support learning requires that students receive relevant, clear feedback on their learning.

The information must also be accessible and understood by those who receive it, especially the student and his or her parents, if applicable. Quality information must also be accessible to others concerned at the school or centre, depending on the situation, and to the admissions offices of higher education institutions. In all cases, school results must remain confidential.

Chapter 3: The Orientations of Evaluation

Evaluation, one of the factors in achieving the objective of success for all students

As set out in the *Plan of Action on Educational Success*, the objective of Quebec's education system is success for all students. Thus, evaluation of learning is one of the factors in creating the conditions that each student needs to succeed, regardless of the sector of education. However, a host of pedagogical and organizational measures are also required to achieve this objective.

Evaluation as a means of helping students to achieve their full potential

The vision of success chosen by the Ministere de l'Education is closely tied to the mission of Quebec's schools, that is, to provide instruction, socialize and provide qualifications. It involves educational success that focuses on the overall development of a student. Adopting this vision of success means that evaluation of learning must be at the service of students to allow them to acquire learning that will contribute to their full intellectual, affective and social development, irrespective of their abilities or specific needs.

Evaluation within a perspective of educational success, but without lowering standards

Evaluation of learning within the perspective of educational success in no way suggests that standards should be lowered. It is not a matter of lowering requirements to help the greatest possible number of students succeed, but, on the contrary, of tapping into evaluation's potential to contribute to establishing optimal learning conditions that will lead to educational success for students.

Thus, the orientations below provide guidelines that will help stakeholders involved in evaluation to fulfill their respective responsibilities. Although all the orientations are intended to guide evaluation practices, those dealing with teachers' professional judgment, evaluation as an integral part of the learning process, and conformity with the education programs or programs of study play a central role.

Orientation 1: Evaluation in the course of learning must be an integral component of all aspects of the learning process.

According to this orientation, evaluation is not an end in itself. Students do not learn in order to be evaluated; they are evaluated so that they can learn more effectively. Evaluation makes it possible to improve the decisions and actions that regulate a student's learning, both on a daily basis as well as at more strategic moments.

Evaluation, a component of the learning process

Thus, evaluation of learning has an essential pedagogical function and must complement all the means used to support students in their learning. Evaluation is considered a component of the learning process rather than a distinct concept.

An important role for evaluation in the course of learning

The integration of evaluation into all aspects of the learning process confirms the important role that evaluation in the course of learning must play: to allow the teacher to gather information on learning regularly so that quick and effective intervention may take place. It also allows the students to make adjustments. However, this integration should not lead to confusing the learning process with the evaluation process; one should not overshadow the other. One way to prevent this is to plan evaluation activities by referring to the education program or program of study concerned. Because of the opportunities for feedback and regulation during the learning process, evaluation is an excellent means of promoting educational success for all students.

Integrating evaluation into the learning process also makes it possible to consider certain types of learning more effectively, especially learning related to social development. Since these types of learning are acquired gradually over longer periods of time, regular follow-ups make it easier to verify the progress made by each student in these areas.

Integrating evaluation into all aspects of the learning process also allows us to reconsider the possible relationships between evaluation in the course of learning and the recognition of competencies, which takes place at strategic moments during students' schooling.

Orientation 2: Evaluation of learning must be based on the teacher's professional judgment.

The judgment of teachers is the cornerstone of the act of evaluating.

By making the teacher's professional judgment the cornerstone of the evaluation of learning, this policy confirms that evaluation is a professional act of primary importance owing to the decisions that ensue from it. The act of evaluation cannot be reduced to applying a set of rules and conditions, although these are essential; evaluation must be based on the teacher's judgment. In this respect, it can only be carried out by an individual who is specifically responsible for evaluating students and who has the required competencies. Thus, both initial and in-service training for teachers in all three sectors plays a central role.

The exercise of judgment is the responsibility of teachers.

Focusing on the teacher's professional judgment confirms the responsibility conferred on teachers by the *Education Act* with regard to the evaluation of learning, without excluding the exercise of responsibilities by other education stakeholders and organizations. However, the exercise of professional judgment by teachers is subject to certain constraints and guidelines. This judgment is also based on the references that guide evaluation practices, such as this policy, the regulatory framework, the standards and conditions set by each institution, information on evaluation in the education programs and programs of study, the different frameworks on the evaluation of learning, and so forth. Also, using these common references in support of judgments is essential given that teachers are increasingly required to work in a collaborative manner.

Judgment based on quality evaluation

Moreover, focusing on the teacher's professional judgment confirms the need for evaluation of the highest quality carried out with rigour in order to avoid any perception of subjectivity. Thus, professional judgment should be exercised based on relevant, valid and sufficient information that is gathered using formal or informal instruments, depending on the situation.

The role of judgment in the evaluation of competencies

This orientation also takes into account the new Québec education environment, especially the fact that competencies are considered to be targets of learning and therefore, focuses of evaluation. The evaluation of competencies requires that a great deal of room be left for teachers' judgment, given that teachers will give an opinion on complex work by students involving different productions or ways of doing things.

Application of this orientation represents a challenge, not only for teachers, but also for administrative staff who are responsible for guiding and supporting teachers in their teaching practices.

Orientation 3: Evaluation of learning must respect differences.

This orientation is based on the fact that students have different abilities and learning styles: they do not all progress at the same pace or in the same way. Differences are also a result of the socioeconomic and cultural characteristics of the environments in which students live.

Evaluation strategies that take into account differences

Taking into account these differences requires that teachers use pedagogical differentiation whereby students develop the required competencies but in different ways. Students are also offered different educational paths that take their needs into consideration. Evaluation of learning must therefore be part of this differentiation, especially in terms of adjusting evaluation methods.

Adapting evaluation conditions, but maintaining the same standards

In the course of learning, the teacher plans certain learning and evaluation situations that are the same for all students in a group, and others that are different to take account of the fact that certain students progress differently. For students with specific needs, the teacher may make more specific adaptations to learning and evaluation situations. In the case of evaluation for the recognition of competencies, the certification of studies or the recognition of prior learning, respecting differences means that evaluation conditions may be adapted for certain students, providing that all students continue to be subject to uniform standards.

Values as meaningful references to take into account differences

Application of this orientation means that the right balance must be found between what needs to be done for all students and what can be done in specific situations. Decisions in this area are all the more difficult because certain organizational constraints must be overcome. In spite of the difficulties that this orientation might represent, it is nonetheless very important. Teachers and specialized personnel can receive training that helps them develop approaches based on differentiation. The fundamental values of justice, equality and equity guide evaluation activities that respect differences. Application of this orientation should in no way create advantages or disadvantages for certain students. Rather, it must allow all students to pursue their learning according to their individual characteristics, aptitudes and aspirations, without any lowering of educational standards.

Orientation 4: Evaluation of learning must be carried out in conformity with the education programs and programs of study.

Whether evaluation is carried out to support learning or recognize competencies, compliance with the programs prescribed by the Ministere de l'Education is essential to ensuring coherence, and consequently, fulfilling the values of justice, equality and equity on which all evaluation activities must be based.

Evaluation of learning in conformity with competency-based programs and their underlying spirit

The programs are the basic reference that must guide any pedagogical intervention, both in terms of learning and evaluation. The programs define the expected outcomes at the end of the instructional period and they provide references for the evaluation of learning. Their prescriptive nature ensures that all Quebec students receive equivalent instruction and are evaluated according to predetermined expectations. Because the programs are defined on the basis of competencies, evaluation must take into account the characteristics of the competencies, including their complexity, their comprehensive nature, the situations in which they are applied and the fact that they are developed over time. Moreover, emphasizing evaluation of competencies does not mean that evaluation of knowledge is excluded because knowledge is an integral part of competencies. Verifying knowledge has an important place in the evaluation of learning.

Application of this orientation requires that the programs be complied with, not only in terms of their requirements, but also with respect to their underlying spirit. Thus, evaluation must take into account all of the instructional aspects, including those focusing on socialization, and generally, those dealing with personal development. Also, conformity with the programs could entail the use of information and communications technologies as a focus of evaluation.

Evaluation of learning in conformity with the education programs and programs of study requires a clear understanding of the targets outlined in these documents.

Orientation 5: Evaluation in the course of learning must allow the student to play an active role in evaluation activities, thereby increasing the student's accountability.

The transition to education that is more learning-centred has led to a review not only of the roles of those involved in evaluation, but also of the role played by the student. In the context of lifelong learning, gradually making students more autonomous and accountable contributes to successful learning. To do this, students must be made aware of their characteristics as learners and be encouraged to increasingly exercise critical judgment. To participate in a meaningful way in monitoring their competency development, students can learn to evaluate themselves and to participate in evaluation with their teacher or their classmates.

Student participation in evaluation in no way reduces the teacher's responsibility for making a judgment.

Application of this orientation must, however, take account of the references presented in this policy and of the regulatory framework that governs the evaluation of learning. Use of the different means mentioned above should not put the persons being evaluated at a disadvantage, nor cast doubt on the objective nature of the evaluation. Also, even though it is important for teachers to incorporate into their evaluation practices these means, which give students an active role, they continue to have the primary responsibility for judging their students' learning progress.

The active role of the student in evaluation in the course of learning

The rationale behind this orientation finds its basis primarily in the context of evaluation to support learning. With regard to evaluation to recognize competencies, caution should be exercised in the use of these evaluation methods: student participation in the evaluation of learning must be limited and supervised. Lastly, this orientation cannot be applied to evaluation for certification purposes or for the recognition of prior learning.

Learning to be acquired at the beginning of students' schooling

Favourable conditions are required to assimilate evaluation practices that give an active role to students. Students must learn how to employ these methods at the beginning of their schooling. For some students, especially those with specific abilities or needs, this type of learning poses a considerable challenge and the support of complementary services personnel may be helpful. In all cases, this learning is facilitated by the use of flexible instruments adapted to the student's age. Since teachers will be providing support to students to acquire this new type of learning, some of them will require appropriate professional development themselves. In this way, everyone may benefit from these evaluation methods.

Orientation 6: Evaluation of learning must involve the collaboration of all stakeholders, while taking into account their respective responsibilities.

Shared and complementary responsibilities established by the legislative and regulatory framework

A number of stakeholders are responsible for the evaluation of learning, but responsibilities must always be exercised in compliance with statutes and the basic school regulations applicable to each sector of education. Responsibilities are accompanied by the obligation to render account of the actions and decisions made with respect to the evaluation of learning. The following is a summary of the responsibilities related to the evaluation of learning of the various stakeholders.

Teachers have the main responsibility for evaluating their students. They do so primarily by planning the evaluation activities, using strategies and evaluation instruments suitable to each situation, and judging their students' learning progress and the level at which competencies have been developed.

School principals and directors of vocational training or adult education centres were given important responsibilities with respect to the evaluation of learning when the *Education Act* was amended. Principals and directors must approve the standards and procedures for the evaluation of learning proposed by teachers and inform the governing board of the approved proposals. The school principal also plays an important role with the cycle teams, the school team or the program teams in vocational training. The principal must act as a facilitator for these teams and ensure the pedagogical supervision of teachers, in particular, with regard to the evaluation of learning.

School boards are responsible for ensuring that each of their schools and vocational training or adult education centres evaluates student learning and administers the examinations imposed by the Minister. They may also impose examinations at the end of each cycle at the elementary and secondary levels.

The government makes regulations that establish standards applicable to educational services in all sectors of education, in particular, standards governing the evaluation of learning and the certification of studies, the diplomas, certificates and other official attestations awarded by the Minister of Education, and the conditions under which they are to be awarded. The Minister of Education may also establish an approach for the gradual implementation of the rules governing the evaluation of learning and the certification of studies. The Minister is responsible for determining the criteria and conditions for recognizing scholastic and experiential learning, and also decides on the general education subjects and the vocational specialities for which he or she sets examinations.

Collaboration, teamwork and partnership in the evaluation of learning

Because of changes to the Quebec education system, there is an increased focus on collaboration and teamwork among those working with students. Educational activities are also taking place in a variety of settings, and the opportunities for home schooling, distance education and workplace training as part of life skills and work skills education programs or job preparation programs are numerous and present

greater possibilities as a result of the introduction of information and communications technologies. Moreover, within the perspective of lifelong learning, the recognition of scholastic or experiential learning is becoming more frequent. Thus, individuals and organizations other than those directly mentioned in the legislative and regulatory framework may be involved in the evaluation of learning. Since schools and school boards are responsible for establishing the conditions and manner of these evaluation activities, the Ministere considers it necessary to provide them with certain guidelines.

Collaboration of certain stakeholders

Professionals working with students and teachers also collaborate in the evaluation of learning to help teachers determine the most appropriate pedagogical actions to support students in their learning.

The parents of students who are minors also play a role in the evaluation of learning. Parents' observations of their children's learning progress are often a supplementary source of information that they, along with educators, can use to take appropriate action. Parents of students with specific needs are also involved in evaluation. For students schooled at home, the role of parents in relation to evaluation cannot replace that of the persons and organizations whose responsibilities in this area are defined in the legal framework. The actions of these parents in monitoring their child's learning progress are based on the references indicated in this policy. Moreover, the Ministere will be providing other guidelines to define the role of these parents and the responsibilities of schools and school boards in relation to the recognition of competencies and the certification of studies.

The businesses and organizations that take in student trainees are partners of the vocational training centres, the adult education centres and the secondary schools for certain types of programs. Their collaboration is required in the evaluation of learning, in particular with regard to practicums. Rehabilitation centres entrusted with the care of young people placed under the responsibility of the Direction de la protection de la jeunesse also collaborate in evaluating them. This collaboration requires that the evaluation practices of stakeholders outside the school system be supervised and that they be reminded that teachers have the main responsibility for evaluation, as provided in the legal framework.

Collaboration guided by the legal framework and based on a common vision of evaluation

The complementarity of actions required of all those involved in the evaluation of learning must take into account the sharing of powers and responsibilities of each, without losing sight of the leading role that teachers must play. The education system must develop conditions for collaboration that are known to the various stakeholders. Collaboration also requires that the main stakeholders adhere to a common vision of evaluation of learning that includes the fundamental values of justice, equality and equity as well as instrumental values such as coherence, openness and rigour.

Orientation 7: Evaluation of learning must reflect the ethical standards shared by the various stakeholders.

Respect for ethics to ensure that students are not adversely affected by evaluation

Evaluation of learning leads to decision making that may have serious consequences for students. These decisions may influence students' motivation, and determine their academic path, degree of success and career choice. This is why it is essential that the school community develop guidelines to ensure that the main stakeholders in the evaluation of learning adopt ethical behaviour. These guidelines, together with the values and orientations set out in this policy, the legislative and regulatory framework, and the standards and conditions established by each educational institution, ensure the quality of evaluation activities.

Evaluation that shows regard for ethical standards gives students the appropriate attention and monitors their learning progress, does not discriminate and respects confidentiality in evaluation practices, justifies decisions to students and to the parents of students who are minors, and so forth. This type of evaluation ensures, among other things, that individuals being evaluated are not put at a disadvantage.

Although a concern for ethics must always be present, it is even more important in the context of evaluation where professional judgment plays an important role; professional judgment must be exercised in accordance with clearly defined guidelines that ensure the credibility of the process. Moreover, the fact that socialization is a definite instructional focus makes reference to ethical guidelines even more appropriate. Lastly, the accountability required of a number of educational stakeholders also confirms the need for guidelines recognized by those involved in the evaluation of learning.

Defining guidelines is a project that mobilizes people.

The development of guidelines to promote ethical behaviours ensures that stakeholders in evaluation exercise their collective responsibility, but enables them to fulfill their own specific responsibilities. Defining, adopting and applying guidelines is a project that mobilizes people in a school community. This process may provide an excellent opportunity to learn about the main references presented in this policy, especially the fundamental and instrumental values on which the policy is based as well as the major orientations.

Orientation 8: Evaluation of learning must contribute to improving the student's quality of spoken and written language.

The evaluation of learning, a factor in improving the quality of spoken and written language

This orientation confirms that evaluation may serve as a factor in encouraging the school community to collectively take charge of the quality of language. Within the perspective of educational success for all students, the need to master spoken and written language is obvious. Since language is an important conveyer of learning, the entire educational community must become involved to ensure that students use quality language in all their activities and that they gradually become more and more concerned with the quality of language until they take charge of mastering it. This concern requires that all teachers care, regardless of the subject they teach.

Concern for the quality of language in the evaluation of learning must be part of the other orientations of this policy. This concern is shown, in particular, by the fact that most education programs and programs of study contain evaluation criteria related to the quality of language. The quality of language can therefore be taken into account in various learning and evaluation situations. Concern for the quality of language is illustrated in the course of learning in various subjects through practices that promote clarity and accuracy in oral and written expression. Regular feedback to students helps them improve their manner of expressing themselves. Consequently, students must not lose marks for errors in the use of language.

For students who are newly arrived in Québec or who are experiencing difficulty mastering language, it is important that the necessary support measures be implemented and that evaluation activities be adapted to enable them to meet reasonable expectations regarding the quality of language. This prevents these students from experiencing any form of exclusion. Also, concern for the quality of language should not reduce the likelihood of recognizing the competencies of these students — other than competencies in oral and written language — and thus of issuing certification or recognizing prior learning.

This orientation aims to establish an appropriate collective practice to improve the students' quality of spoken and written language. Schools and school boards are therefore encouraged to use the appropriate means to apply this orientation.

Orientation 9: Evaluation for certification purposes must render account of the acquisition of competencies and thus uphold the value that society accords to official certification documents.

The importance of decisions to certify studies and their consequences on individuals and on society in general justify that certification of studies be subject to guidelines. In the education policy statement *Quebec Schools on Course*, "certification of studies" is defined as follows: "The certification of studies is the mechanism by which a state recognizes the schooling successfully completed by students by issuing an official document (attestation, certificate or diploma) to those who meet stated requirements. This official recognition is accorded a certain value by society, depending on the qualification."

Evaluation upholds the value accorded by society to official certification documents.

At the legal level, several means have already been implemented to guarantee the quality of official documents such as diplomas, attestations and certificates issued by the Minister of Education. The *Education Act* determines powers and responsibilities regarding certification whereas the basic school regulations establish the rules for awarding official certification documents. The various administrative manuals dealing with certification of studies explain the manner in which studies are certified. However, the social recognition of official certification documents does not solely depend on these rules: it is also a function of the quality of the evaluation of learning that leads to the awarding of such documents.

Moreover, the Ministere considers it important that its intentions regarding certification of studies be indicated in this policy to ensure that the actions of educational stakeholders are consistent with those of the Ministere. This orientation applies when official certification documents are issued under the responsibility of the Minister of Education, as set out in the *Education Act* and in the various basic school regulations. The Ministere would also like to highlight certain principles that serve as the foundation for the different certification systems for the three sectors of education.

Requirements for success in line with the schools' mission, social expectations and the programs

- The requirements for success, with a view to obtaining official certification documents, must be based on the schools' mission.
- The rules for obtaining the different certification documents must be realistic and reflect the expectations of Québec society in terms of the qualifications that will allow individuals to meet contemporary challenges.
- Because the education programs and programs of study specify the expected outcomes, it is essential that they be taken into account when establishing rules for awarding official certification documents. Thus, the competencies serve as references for the evaluation of learning for certification purposes.

Identical certification rules, and adaptation of evaluation conditions whenever needed

- In keeping with the values of justice, equality and equity, the Minister prescribes a set of identical certification rules applicable to all students enrolled in a program leading to the issue of the same certification document. In the case of students who are receiving all or part of their education outside a school setting and of certain students with specific needs, it may be necessary to adapt some evaluation conditions to enable them to demonstrate the development of their competencies. In the latter case, such decisions must be made within the scope of an individualized education plan, in conjunction with the stakeholders concerned. The applicable administrative manual provides guidelines for these types of situations.

- The certification of studies is part of a system and therefore takes into account the relationships among the different sectors and levels of education. Needs related to the admission, support and guidance of students must be considered. Also, bridges must be in place to allow students to transfer into other sectors or levels of education.

- Although the results obtained for certification purposes serve primarily to recognize successfully completed schooling through the awarding of an official certification document, the results may sometimes be used as an adjustment mechanism for the education system.

The Ministere also considers it necessary to indicate some principles that guarantee the quality of evaluation for certification purposes.

- Certification of studies should be based on the reliable, rigorous, valid and equitable evaluation of learning to ensure that certain individuals are not at a disadvantage.

- In order to maintain the credibility of the certification mechanism, the Ministere has established evaluation procedures and conditions. Because they vary according to sector of education, they are presented in the specific sections dealing with the youth sector, adult sector and vocational training sector.

- Evaluation for certification purposes must be consistent with evaluation generally used throughout the students' schooling; it must be compatible with the education programs and programs of study.

Orientation 10: Recognition of prior learning must allow for the recognition of an individual's competencies regardless of the conditions under which the learning was acquired.

It is now recognized that learning may be acquired in a variety of settings, at different times and in different ways. Learning is no longer the exclusive domain of schools. It is also well established that many reasons may motivate people to have their learning officially recognized. These motives may vary depending on whether a young person or an adult is concerned. In these circumstances, the importance of recognizing scholastic and experiential learning is obvious. Moreover, this orientation is in line with the *Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training*, which recognizes the importance of prior learning and competencies by making them one of the four major orientations.

The need to integrate in this policy a component on the recognition of experiential learning is also evident because this recognition, just as evaluation of academic learning, may contribute in its own way to educational success for all students. Through this orientation, the Ministere would like to clarify what is meant by recognition of prior learning, indicate to whom it may apply, and state its intentions in this regard.

Recognition of prior learning makes it possible for people to avoid taking unnecessary training.

The Conseil superieur de l'education indicates what is meant by "recognition of prior learning." Prior learning is the knowledge, attitudes, abilities, competencies and capacities developed or learned by an individual. If the learning took place in a school setting, it is referred to as "scholastic learning." If the learning was acquired outside of a school setting, it is referred to as "experiential learning." The term "recognition" refers to the action of recognizing something officially. Thus, recognition of prior learning is the process by which a decision-making body attests that the learning acquired by an individual meets certain conditions established under statutes and regulations. At the end of the process, the individual may be granted credits, an official certification document or other forms of recognition. In all cases, as indicated in the policy on adult education, recognition of prior learning, above all, "makes it possible for people to avoid taking unnecessary training for competencies or knowledge they already possess in whole or in part, in general education or occupational training."

The right to the recognition of prior learning

Certain provisions of the *Education Act* and the various basic school regulations already deal with recognition of prior learning and will not be reviewed here. The Ministere would like to indicate that recognition of prior learning applies to general education in the youth or adult sectors and to vocational training. In general education in the youth sector, in accordance with the *Education Act*, the term "recognition of learning achievement" is used. Recognition of prior learning or of learning achievement is a right accorded to all individuals.

Given that the manner of applying recognition of prior learning in the different sectors varies, details are provided in the respective sections of this policy.

The Ministere would, however, like to indicate certain general principles that must be applied in any situation involving the recognition of prior learning, regardless of the sector:

- Because recognition of prior learning is meant principally to serve the interests of individuals requesting it, measures must be implemented to help them with the process.
- individuals to whom the right to recognition of prior learning is recognized are subject to a corresponding duty that they provide evidence that they have actually acquired the learning for which they are requesting recognition.
- The approach to recognition of prior learning is based on the values of justice, equality and equity and the tools used are reliable, valid and rigorous.
- Prior learning is usually recognized in accordance with the requirements of the various education programs or programs of study.
- In order to take into account the specific context of recognition of prior learning, it is possible and desirable for the manner and conditions of evaluation to be adapted.
- Recognition of prior learning must never result in a lowering of standards. The Ministere plans on upholding the quality and value of official certification documents.

Chapter 4: The Purposes and Process of Evaluation

Evaluation practices are based on respect for the values and orientations indicated above as well as on a set of conceptual and methodological references that characterize the pedagogical field of evaluation of learning.

The effects on evaluation of the shift from a paradigm of teaching to one of learning

There have been a number of developments in recent years in the field of evaluation of learning to take into account, among other things, the shift from a paradigm of teaching to one of learning. Research in the field throughout the world has identified the limitations of traditional evaluation models, and led to other avenues for the evaluation of learning in response to changes in perspective that have taken place in most education systems. Of the main currents of thought, evaluation to support learning has been the most influential. This perspective is accompanied by changes in viewpoints regarding the purposes and process of evaluation that the Ministere de l'Education considers important to specify, because together with the values and orientations, they will help explain its vision of evaluation. First and foremost, the Ministere defines the evaluation of learning as follows:

> ***Evaluation is the process whereby a judgment is made on a student's learning on the basis of information gathered, analyzed and interpreted, for the purpose of making pedagogical and administrative decisions.***

4.1 The Purposes of Evaluation

Throughout a student's schooling, evaluation is used to verify learning progress with a view to providing support for learning, to make precise diagnoses, to verify the level of competency development, to certify studies and to recognize prior learning.

The two primary purposes of evaluation: support for learning and recognition of competencies

The Ministere recognizes that evaluation has two primary purposes: support for learning and recognition of competencies. The first, in large part because of its potential for regulation and because it allows for continuous feedback, is associated with formative evaluation. As for evaluation to recognize competencies, it cannot be qualified as summative given that it does not relate to the sum of evaluation results accumulated during a given period, as is normally the case in general education in the youth sector. In fact, the goal of evaluation with a view to recognizing competencies is to verify whether the expected level of competency development has been attained.

Given the variety of situations in which a student is evaluated, the appropriate purpose must be chosen according to the intent of the evaluation and the type of decision to be made.

The two purposes of evaluation are presented based on the situation and on the moment when the evaluation takes place in a student's schooling. The term "learning sequence" used below refers to a cycle, course or module.

Evaluation to support learning

Verifying students' learning progress and carrying out diagnostic evaluation

When a learning sequence begins, the teacher may feel it necessary to verify what the students have learned so far in order to know where to begin with the new material that has been planned. This evaluation allows adjustments to the teaching and learning activities based on the students' characteristics and may lead to implementing differentiated learning activities according to the students' potential. It results in a diagnostic evaluation of students who demonstrate the most pronounced weaknesses followed by proposals for appropriate assistance measures. It also helps the teacher when the students must be grouped into work teams. In all cases, this evaluation leads to implementing conditions conducive to learning for all students. Evaluation activities thus serve the purpose of providing support for learning.

Regulation of the learning and teaching processes

In the course of learning, evaluation serves the purpose of providing support for learning because it aims primarily at fostering students' progress. It allows for regulation of the learning and teaching processes. Thus, the teacher verifies to what extent the pedagogical intervention has produced the expected outcomes on student learning and makes adjustments if necessary. The teacher regularly informs students about their strengths and weaknesses and offers appropriate enrichment and support measures. The students use this feedback to gradually take charge of their learning.

Evaluation to recognize competencies

Toward the end of a learning sequence or at the end of a program, evaluation aims at reporting the level at which competencies that have been the focus of learning during this period have been developed. This evaluation serves the purpose of recognizing competencies and refers to the requirements prescribed in the programs. The degree to which a student has satisfied these requirements is verified.

Reporting on competency development for the purposes of the progress report and the certification of studies

In general education in the youth sector, evaluation to recognize competencies is useful in preparing an end-of-cycle report. This report can be used to determine what is required by a student : a path adapted to his or her needs, specific support measures, adjustment of the individualized education plan, etc. The recognition of competencies also provides the basis for decisions related to the certification of studies; the judgments on competency development are used to decide whether to award the diploma that certifies the studies. When other sectors of education and higher education institutions take over a student's schooling, they use the results of evaluation aimed at recognizing competencies for admission purposes or for providing the student with assistance, support or guidance.

Recognition of competencies for the purposes of recognizing prior learning

Sometimes prior learning, both scholastic and experiential, needs to be recognized before a student can begin a program. This is generally the case where a student is new to the Québec school system or where a person has left the system for a certain time and wishes to go back to school. Because the programs are competency-based, the level of development by the student of the competencies for the program in question is verified. In this sense, recognition of prior learning involves recognition of competencies. The recognition of prior learning sometimes results in the identification of learning weaknesses and the person concerned being given the opportunity to fulfill any requirements before enrolling in the desired program.

In the current context of public management, accountability is an important concern and thus, it is difficult not to mention that school results may be referred to together with other indicators for the purpose of making adjustments to the education system. This process involves verification of whether the expected outcomes for each clientele are obtained and, if required, correction of the education programs or programs of study or the means used to apply them, in keeping with the established legal responsibilities. The information gathered on student learning can be used by schools, in particular in establishing and following up their success plan.

Evaluation of learning to improve the education system and attain the success plan objectives

The information required to monitor the education system may come from regular evaluation activities for recognizing competencies or from specific evaluation activities. Since the latter type of evaluation activity is not designed to measure the achievement of each student, great caution must be exercised if the results are used for any purpose other than to make adjustments to the education system. Regardless of how information is gathered, it must be used to foster the continuous improvement of educational services and not to compare the results of different students or the performance of educational institutions.

Complementarity of the different purposes of evaluation

Although the different purposes of evaluation have distinct characteristics, they must be considered to be complementary. Indeed, these different forms of evaluation may all contribute in their own way to the educational success of all students. However, evaluation to promote learning must be emphasized. Evaluation to recognize competencies must also lead to decisions and actions that will provide students with the support they need to learn.

The different purposes of evaluation may contribute to educational success.

4.2 The Evaluation Process

Throughout their schooling, students are evaluated to enable them to learn more effectively and succeed. The teacher plays a central role in the evaluation of learning. A number of decisions by the teacher rely on judgments about students' learning that are founded on numerous and varied evaluation activities. Although they take place in a variety of situations, these evaluation activities reflect the evaluation process, which, as emphasized earlier, is based on recognized fundamental and instrumental values.

Teachers have the main responsibility for the evaluation of learning.

Evaluation is a complex process that is largely based on the teacher's professional judgment. Consequently, the exercise of this judgment must be based on guidelines to maintain the credibility of evaluation activities.

Evaluation is a complex process.

Evaluation first requires that its goal be clearly established. It also necessitates planning, information gathering and interpretation, and the making of a judgment. Lastly, evaluation must lead to decisions and actions. For certain students with specific needs, evaluation must be dealt with in an individualized education plan. Although the evaluation process is a series of stages ranging from planning to decision/action, it is more iterative than sequential. Thus, the order of stages varies depending on the situation. Each of these stages has specific characteristics, which are described below.

Planning

Establish the goal of the evaluation

Planning the evaluation of learning first involves establishing the goal of the evaluation, that is, defining its objective. Choices are then made during the planning stage on the basis of this goal. This is generally done by the teacher. As required, several teachers or individuals who work with the students participate in the planning process.

The choice of evaluation means must correspond to the goal of the evaluation.

Planning usually then involves choosing the appropriate evaluation means according to the chosen goal. Thus, in keeping with the education programs and the programs of study, the evaluation focuses must first be defined and then the timing and methods must be established to support the gathering and interpretation of information, the judgment and the decision.

Flexible, rigorous planning

Evaluation to support learning requires flexible and rigorous planning to integrate it into learning activities. Good planning enables the teacher to make modifications at any time to deal with unexpected events. It allows the teacher and others involved in evaluation to provide feedback and help that the student needs to develop competencies. Thus, in the case of students with specific needs, the teacher regularly evaluates the appropriateness of strategies adopted in the individualized education plan and adjusts them, as required, so as to support the student's learning progress.

Planning adapted to various situations

Evaluation activities serving to recognize competencies or prior learning or to certify studies require rigorous planning. Ensuing decisions (nature of the support to be provided to the student, going from one cycle or level of education to the next, orientation toward an educational path, earning a diploma, admission to a program, etc.) have important consequences for students and must therefore be based on accurate judgments resulting from good planning.

Information gathering and interpretation

Information gathering and interpretation adapted to the goal of the evaluation

This stage consists in gathering information on students' learning and interpreting it. Information gathering and interpretation methods must be adapted to the purpose of the evaluation and the underlying goal. Information gathering is especially important as part of an individualized education plan, because it promotes decision making adapted to students with specific needs.

For the purposes of evaluation in the course of learning, the gathering of information during classroom activities is usually sufficient to allow the teacher to make the required observations. Significant records of a student's learning are kept and observations recorded over time so that they are available when needed.

Quality information to ensure the credibility of the evaluation

Evaluation to recognize competencies for the purposes of an end-of-cycle report, to certify studies or to recognize prior learning requires the use of a systematic mechanism. The instruments used must provide a sufficient amount of relevant information on the basis of which a judgment can be made as to the level at which competencies have been developed and knowledge acquired.

Information gathered is compared with expected outcomes.

Then, information on the student's learning is compared with what is expected. This is referred to as criterion-referenced interpretation. Generally, the program provides information on the outcomes expected upon completion of the program as well as instructions for the evaluation of learning. This infor-

mation is used to establish guidelines on the desired progression in competency development. Criterion-referenced interpretation is used in this way in different evaluation contexts for the purpose of supporting learning or recognizing competencies.

Judgment

Although it is a separate stage, judgment is a factor throughout the evaluation process. It is sometimes informal, but is nevertheless the backdrop for all stages of the evaluation process. Judgment serves in the planning of learning and evaluation situations. It comes into play when choosing evaluation methods and criteria, to ensure that they are appropriate and valid in relation to the goal of the evaluation. Lastly, judgment makes it possible to report on student learning and leads to decision making.

Judgment is a factor throughout the evaluation process.

For the purpose of evaluating competencies, any judgment on their development must make use of appropriate instruments. Since the judgment relies on analysis and synthesis of the information gathered, it must be preceded by information gathering and interpretation. The judgment is possible only if quality information on student learning is available.

Decision/action

The decision is the ultimate aim of evaluation. The decision made following judgment varies according to the evaluation context, and may be of a pedagogical or an administrative nature.

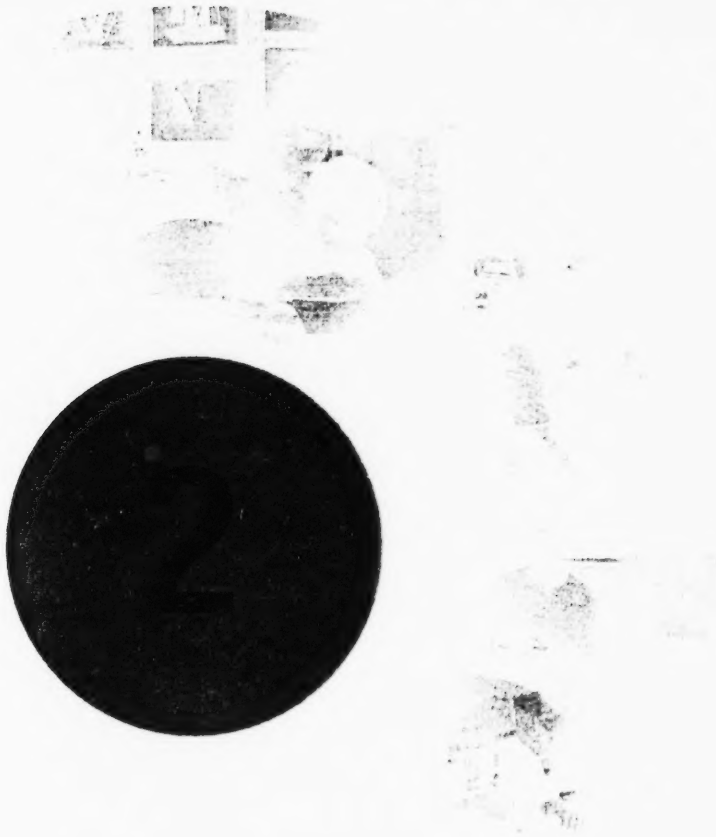
Evaluation leads to decisions and actions.

In a situation involving evaluation to support learning, judgment often consists of an informal assessment and the ensuing decision serves to regulate the teaching or learning process.

In a situation involving evaluation to recognize competencies, decisions are more formal in nature and they can have serious consequences for students' educational plans. Thus, the results obtained are generally used along with other information to decide how a student should pursue the learning. Evaluation results are also useful as part of academic and vocational guidance and for admission to other sectors (youth, adult, vocational) or levels (college, university) of education. In certain situations, especially when specific criteria exist for enrollment in a program or type of training, or when enrollment is limited, it may be necessary to compare students' results with the criteria established for admission-related decisions. Thus, the results must be clearly expressed to ensure that the decisions made are in the best interests of the students.

Comparing the results of a student to those of other students in his or her class does not have an important role in evaluation that aims primarily to support learning by providing information on student progress, achievements and difficulties, so that students can adjust their learning process. Emphasis should be placed on comparing an individual student's learning with what is expected.

Because evaluating also means informing, the results and the decisions concerning a student must be communicated to the student, his or her parents in the case of a minor, and all school stakeholders who may require the information. In the second part of this policy, the reporting of results will be discussed for each sector of education.



THE SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF EVALUATION OF LEARNING IN THE THREE SECTORS OF EDUCATION

Although a common vision of evaluation of learning exists in general education in the youth and adult sectors and in vocational training, the specific characteristics of evaluation in these three sectors that deal with the types and organization of instruction, the respective clienteles and the main stakeholders should be highlighted.

Chapter 5: Evaluation of Learning in General Education in the Youth Sector

5.1 Background

The historical background of evaluation of learning in elementary and secondary school is related to the role of evaluation in the instruction of students and the recognition of studies for certification purposes.

Evolution of the evaluation of learning

Evaluation of learning in elementary and secondary school has gone through three main periods: evaluation based on the mastery of factual content, evaluation based on the mastery of specified objectives and evaluation of competencies.

Evaluation of knowledge acquisition

Until 1981, students were evaluated primarily on how much of the knowledge prescribed by a program they had acquired. Teachers' practices included many assessments that allowed a considerable amount of data to be accumulated. Standardized examinations prepared by the school boards and a prototype of a computerized report card were made available to teachers. During the 1970s, review of evaluation practices in light of prevalent pedagogical theories led to minor changes.

Evaluation of the mastery of specified objectives

In 1981, the Ministere de l'Education published the *General Policy for Educational Evaluation for Preschool, Elementary and Secondary Schools*, which marked the beginning of a considerable change in practices and the development of extensive shared expertise. Evaluation, in conformity with the new programs of study at that time, focused on the mastery of objectives prescribed in the programs. Evaluation practices increasingly emphasized formative evaluation and criterion-referenced interpretation. Since the 1980s, considerable effort has been put into initial and in-service teacher training in evaluation of learning. However, in its 1992 brief, *Evaluer les apprentissages au primaire : un equilibre a trouver*, the Conseil superieur de l'education observed that evaluation for the purpose of regulation was not yet well integrated into pedagogical practices.

Evaluation of competencies

Today, evaluation practices have two main characteristics. They are based on the evaluation of competencies, in accordance with the new education programs. Secondly, they emphasize evaluation to support learning, resulting in evaluation activities integrated into the learning and teaching processes.

Important contribution of teachers

Although the Ministere has contributed to the evolution of the evaluation of learning in Quebec, evaluation practices would not have evolved without the sustained effort of the main educational stakeholders—the teachers—and without their dedication to professional development and to updating their skills in this field.

Changes in the certification of studies

Since 1965, the Ministere has had responsibility for awarding official certification documents. Until 1966, two diplomas existed: a certificate certifying successful completion of elementary education and an attestation for secondary school studies. Since 1966, only secondary studies have been officially certified.

Evolving uniform examinations

The Ministere determines the requirements to be considered for the recognition of studies and verifies whether candidates meet these requirements by means of examinations. Passing one or more uniform examinations has been a requirement over the years. At certain times, examinations were administered for all the subjects in a program while at others, they gradually came to be used only for those subjects that were compulsory to certify secondary studies and for subjects that were required for admission to college. The form of the examinations themselves has also changed. An objectively scored questionnaire, which made it possible to computerize the scoring and processing of results, was used for a number of years; then, essay-type questions marked by teachers were introduced. In French, language of instruction, the examination is largely consistent with the competency-based approach.

Responsibility shared by the Ministere and the school bodies

Since 1974, responsibility for evaluation for certification purposes has been shared by the Ministere de l'Education and educational institutions. The results of a student's evaluation by the school account for approximately half of the student's final mark, with the rest coming from the result on the uniform examination. Also, the majority of credits required for the certification of secondary studies comes from evaluations conducted by educational institutions only.

5.2 Specific Applications of the Orientations

Although the values, orientations and characteristics of the purposes and process of evaluation presented in Part I provide guidelines for the evaluation of learning in the youth sector, other aspects specific to this sector colour evaluation practices. Cycle-based instruction and the education programs, where the competencies are the focus of learning, undoubtedly have an impact on evaluation. This section therefore deals with certain general aspects of evaluation, and presents information on specific areas such as the certification of studies, instruments, reporting of results and the recognition of learning achievement.

A definition of "cycle" and "competency"

It is first necessary to review what is meant by "cycle" and "competency" in general education in the youth sector. A cycle is defined as the period of learning during which students acquire a set of subject-specific and cross-curricular competencies that allow them to move on to other learning. In the education programs for the elementary and secondary levels, a competency is defined as the capacity to act effectively by drawing on a variety of resources. The capacity to act associated with a competency implies that students, in seeking to attain a clearly defined goal, deliberately acquire and use intellectual and social concepts and skills. The competency is used in fairly complex situations, and students can continue to develop it throughout their schooling and beyond.

5.2.1 General Aspects

A concerted approach to evaluation in cycle-based instruction

In the context of cycle-based instruction, Orientation 6, which requires that evaluation of learning involve the collaboration of all stakeholders, must be applied by taking into account the interaction among the teacher, cycle team and school team. Given the numerous opportunities for collaboration, evaluation activities are concerted and therefore they increase the role of the school administration to ensure coordinated action.

Planning by the cycle team and school team

In accordance with Orientation 1, planning should be done by the teacher with the cycle team in order to fully exploit the potential of evaluation integrated into the learning process and to establish the necessary balance between the two purposes of evaluation consisting of support for learning and of recognition of competencies (normally done at the end of a cycle). Planning an overall strategy for evaluation means that the cycle team and school team will have to agree on when and how evaluation will be conducted to account for student learning acquired during and at the end of the cycle.

Planning that is consistent with the education programs, end-of-cycle outcomes and evaluation criteria

In keeping with Orientation 4, which requires that evaluation be carried out in conformity with the education programs, planning must lead to learning and evaluation activities that take into account all of the program components: the subject-specific competencies in the different subject areas, the cross-curricular competencies and the broad areas of learning. Planning must also be guided by the information on evaluation presented in the education programs, that is, the end-of-cycle outcomes and the evaluation criteria. Conformity with the education programs also requires the use of evaluation methods that are consistent with the spirit of the programs. Because the programs are competency-based, the evaluation situations must help to verify to what extent students can effectively mobilize the resources required to apply the competencies in a variety of situations. Knowledge as a resource to be used must also be considered. The characteristics of these evaluation situations are presented in section 5.2.3.

Differentiation in evaluation, a responsibility shared by the teacher, cycle team and school team

To take into account Orientation 3, which deals with respect for differences in evaluation, the teacher, cycle team and school team may agree on the conditions for differentiating evaluation in certain situations. Thus, diverse information-gathering instruments and diagnostic tools could be used. Also, concerted and coordinated actions are required for students with specific abilities or needs in order to support them in their learning. The individualized education plan is the best means to achieve this.

During the cycle, although teachers are in the best position to make a judgment on learning progress and the development of subject-specific competencies, it is sometimes necessary for them to consult with others who work with the student. In the case of cross-curricular competencies, responsibility for the assessment of student progress may be shared by the different members of the cycle team and any other person working with the student. In conformity with Orientation 5, regarding the student's active role in evaluation in the course of learning, all stakeholders must agree on common guidelines that indicate the conditions of the student's involvement.

The judgment on learning is a shared responsibility when the end-of-cycle report is prepared.

Toward the end of a cycle, especially when preparing the end-of-cycle report, the cycle team must work together to make judgments on the development of subject-specific and cross-curricular competencies and collaborate as needed with other persons who work with the student. When a student goes from one cycle to another, and from elementary school to secondary school, the cycle team and school team contribute to the decision making by providing information on the student's learning. This information is useful to the team of teachers that will take over the student's education, and may propose actions such as support or enrichment measures. The information is also required when a student transfers into general education in the adult sector or into vocational training.

Conditions necessary for a concerted and consistent approach in evaluation

Two preliminary conditions for a concerted approach must be fulfilled for the coherence required in evaluation to be achieved. Firstly, there must be a shared understanding of the education program. Secondly, effective collaboration depends on how work time is planned. In elementary school, the smaller number of teachers in the cycle team encourages joint action. In secondary school, procedures must be set up to promote collaboration. The need for planning mechanisms that are part of the work organization of the teachers in the same cycle and that will facilitate collaboration can therefore not be overstated.

5.2.2 Certification of Studies

Part I of this policy presents the Ministere's general intentions with respect to the certification of studies. This section focuses on the characteristics of the updated certification of secondary studies within the scope of the education reform as it applies to general education in the youth sector. The Ministere's intentions in this area are supported by legislative and regulatory provisions. Also, the *Administrative Manual for the Certification of Secondary School Studies* completes the information presented in this policy.

Certification of studies in line with society's expectations and changes introduced in Cycle Two of secondary school education

There are a number of reasons that support an important shift in the certification of studies. Firstly, the education policy statement *Quebec Schools on Course* confirms the need for consolidated certification of studies to ensure that each official certification document is issued according to the same conditions and requirements, that educational institutions comply with the education programs, and that quantitative and qualitative data is obtained on the individual and collective performance of secondary school students. Secondly, the changes made to Cycle Two of secondary school, with a view to consolidating basic education and being open to diversification, as well the characteristics of the education program, introduce realities that must be taken into account in the certification of studies. Lastly, consideration must be given to social expectations concerning what young people should be able to accomplish at the end of their secondary studies to deal with the growing challenges of the 21st century and succeed in their endeavours. These expectations have changed along with the needs of Quebec society, and have generally become more stringent.

In terms of providing qualifications, one component of the mission of Quebec schools, the education system must implement means to fairly and equitably render account of the competencies acquired by

students, thereby helping them to continue their studies or enter the job market. The social value of the official documents awarded by the Ministere de l'Education depends largely on the relevance of the certification requirements in terms of social expectations and on the quality of the evaluation.

Orientation 9 presents the principles that guide the actions of the Ministere and educational institutions in relation to the certification of studies. The proper application of several of these principles in general education in the youth sector is explained below.

- The certification of secondary school studies must promote educational success; it must take into account differentiated paths and all the aspects that contribute to an individual's overall development.

- The certification of studies must take into consideration all of the components of the education programs, that is, the subject areas, the broad areas of learning and the cross-curricular competencies. The evaluation criteria and the outcomes prescribed in the programs serve as references for evaluation to certify studies; such evaluation must be in line with that used during the instruction. Evaluation procedures for certification purposes must be varied and flexible to take into account the specific features of each subject.

- Success must be confirmed by means of competency-based evaluation that takes into account the end-of-cycle outcomes set out in the education program.

The Ministere also considers it necessary to indicate in this policy the qualification associated with each of the educational paths as well as the responsibilities of different parties in the certification of studies.

Keeping the Secondary School Diploma

- Successful completion of the secondary curriculum is certified by the issue of a Secondary School Diploma (SSD), and the requirements are the same for all students. However, evaluation procedures that take into account the characteristics and needs of certain students must be devised.

A broadening of requirements of basic education and consideration of diversified education

  The SSD must guarantee that graduates satisfy the requirements of the common subjects prescribed by the basic school regulation. Students must therefore demonstrate the acquisition of the subject-specific competencies in the different subject areas. If applicable, students must also demonstrate the acquisition of learning in optional subjects or local programs. Other conditions could be added to ensure that the rules for awarding an SSD reflect all of the components of the secondary curriculum.

Diverse qualification for differentiated paths

- Certain students may achieve success through access to the diversified paths that may provide them with their first vocational qualification at the secondary level. By certifying these paths according to criteria specific to each of them, these students may receive qualifications allowing them to enter the job market or continue their studies. For students enrolled in adapted programs, success may take the form of greater participation in society. For this purpose, social recognition of their educational path is equally important.

The *Basic school regulation for preschool, elementary and secondary school education* sets out the requirements for obtaining an SSD, the subjects students must pass to obtain an SSD and how results are expressed (qualitative or quantitative). It also indicates the certification documents that may replace the existing *certificate in life skills and work skills education* and *certificate in on-the-job training in a recycling facility*. If required, new documents may be introduced to certify successful completion of adapted programs or diversified paths.

Maintenance of the principle of shared responsibility

Legislative and regulatory provisions provide that the Ministere shares responsibility for evaluation to certify secondary school studies with schools and school boards. For the purpose of awarding an SSD, regarding the subjects for which the Minister imposes uniform examinations, the results considered for the certification of studies are calculated partly on the basis of the results on these uniform examinations and partly on the basis of the school results. Regarding the other subjects, only the school results count. In the case of the other certification documents, the schools and school boards have the main responsibility for certification since the Ministere is only involved in issuing these certificates upon a request by the educational institutions. In order to maintain equity in certification and to confirm the importance of the role of schools and school boards, the principle of shared responsibility is conserved.

5.2.3 Instruments for the Evaluation of Learning

Instruments in development and adapted to evaluation orientations

The type of evaluation required by the introduction of competency-based programs means that evaluation instruments used both to support learning and to recognize competencies need to be reviewed. In all cases, regardless of whether evaluation falls under the responsibility of the Ministère or schools and school boards, the evaluation instruments used must accurately reflect the complexity and diversity of student learning.

Regarding evaluation activities under local responsibility, the Ministere wishes to emphasize that formal and informal instruments must be used to gather information on learning. To help schools and school boards, the Ministere provides them with frameworks for the evaluation of learning at the elementary and secondary levels. These frameworks describe appropriate instruments, especially for evaluation to support learning. Moreover, the formal instruments suited to the evaluation of competencies that the Ministere uses within the scope of its own responsibilities may also serve as examples for schools and school boards.

Examinations in the form of subject-specific evaluation situations

- Ministerial examinations take the form of evaluation situations specific to each subject; they are designed to verify the level at which students have developed the competencies according to the outcomes prescribed by the education program. These situations include complex tasks that generally involve elaborate productions carried out for varying lengths of time. They make it possible to verify to what extent students are able to mobilize the resources, including knowledge,

that the competency requires. The subject-specific evaluation situations will be developed byteachers who act under the Ministere's responsibility. The conditions for administering these ministerial examinations are the same in all schools and school boards. However, in order to take into account the needs of certain students as determined within the scope of an individualized education plan, these conditions may be adapted by the schools, subject to the conditions defined by the Ministere. The correction of these examinations is in some cases centralized and in others, done by schools and school boards. In the latter case, the Ministere provides correction guides to help in the marking of the examinations.

Integrative evaluation situations

- Other evaluation situations are integrative; they make it possible to verify the extent to which the students are able to make use of various competencies related to subject areas and of cross-curricular competencies to solve problems related to the broad areas of learning. The Ministere provides guidelines to support the schools and school boards in developing this type of evaluation situation.

Complementary examinations

- In order to make evaluation for certification purposes more uniform in the schools and school boards, the Ministere plans on providing guidelines and examples of evaluation instruments to the persons responsible for evaluation. The Ministere may also make available optional complementary examinations.

Compulsory provincial examinations for elementary school

- Lastly, in order to ensure the quality of educational services, the Ministere imposes examinations for elementary and secondary school. This evaluation serves in making adjustments to the education system and in supporting schools and school boards in their ongoing improvements. Compulsory provincial examinations are administered to all students in Quebec who complete Cycle Three in elementary school. Developed by the Ministere, they are administered under uniform conditions and scheduled in an official timetable. They cover basic subjects and evaluate the level at which students have developed competencies in relation to the outcomes defined in the education program. A sample of these examinations is corrected by the Ministere. This makes it possible to verify whether students throughout Quebec have acquired the knowledge and developed the competencies set out in the education program. This ministerial initiative does not take away the power that school boards have under the *Education Act* to impose internal examinations at the end of each cycle in elementary school. Also, the compulsory provincial examinations at the end of elementary school do not affect the rules that the school boards may set regarding promotion from elementary to secondary school, unless they decide otherwise.

5.2.4 Reporting of Results

The report card and end-of-cycle report

Parents and students have the right to know.

In accordance with the principle of openness, informing students and parents is one of the objectives of the evaluation process. They have the right to know the learning results and the related decisions in order to fulfill their expected roles. Well-informed parents are in a better position to help their children with their studies. Similarly, students who have specific information on their strengths and weaknesses can focus their efforts better.

Other school stakeholders or organizations from the different sectors or levels of education may also need information on students' learning, be it to provide students with more appropriate support, to offer educational paths that correspond to students' aptitudes, interests or aspirations, to admit students into specific programs, and so forth. The *Basic school regulation for preschool, elementary and secondary school education* specifically provides for the reporting of results to parents.

Presenting information in various ways

In preschool, elementary and secondary school education, the report card is still an important communication tool between the school and parents. Together with regular information provided by way of parent-teacher meetings, portfolios, checklists, annotations on student work, school agendas or other documents, the report card makes it possible to follow a student's learning. During a cycle, the report card informs parents and students on learning progress.

The end-of-cycle report

The last report card in a cycle is an end-of-cycle report: it summarizes the development of competencies by a student. Regardless of how the information is presented, it is important that it does not create any difficulties for a student who is transferring from one school to another or who is seeking admission to another sector or level of education.

Quality information available to parents and students

Decisions in relation to the report card are the responsibility of the school principal, who receives proposals from the teachers. However, the Ministere would like to see the school boards develop a report card that they would make available to the schools under their authority to achieve a certain degree of uniformity. Every standard report card must be clear and concise, and contain the information required by parents to see whether their children are making progress, how they are doing so, and where they stand in relation to the expected outcomes of the education program. Thus, the report card does not only contain the results of learning achievement, but also information on a student's overall development.

in elementary school, in order to be consistent with the orientations of the reform, the report card must be descriptive and emphasize qualitative results expressed as ratings (e.g. A, B, C, D). Depending on the needs of the school's community, results may also be expressed as grades at the end of a cycle. But regardless of whether students' results are expressed as grades or ratings, or are compared with the average mark of the group, competencies must be judged by comparing students' achievements with what is expected under the education program.

Ways of expressing results

To take into account the particular context of secondary school, including the need to certify studies, the basic school regulation indicates the form that the report card should take and how results should be expressed.

The statement of competencies

Compliance with one aspect of the schools' mission—*to provide qualifications, by means of diversified paths*—is a major challenge for the education system. Schools must not only promote the educational success of all students, they must also officially recognize this success in order to facilitate further studies or social and occupational integration.

The official recognition of competencies, regardless of the educational path or the level of studies completed, is one more step toward qualification. To give concrete expression to this recognition, the Ministere de l'Education uses the statement of competencies.

The statement of competencies is an official document issued by the Ministere. It replaces the statement of marks given to students in Secondary IV and V. The statement of competencies differs from the statement of marks in that it is not reserved exclusively for students in Secondary IV and V and the results are not limited to the subjects considered for the certification of studies. In addition, students who interrupt their studies or change their educational path receive a statement of competencies that indicates the subject-specific and cross-curricular competencies that have been fully or partially acquired.

The statement of competencies attests to the competencies that have been fully or partially acquired.

Because the statement of competencies provides a profile of a student's education, it facilitates decisions regarding orientation and admission to vocational training, general education in the adult sector or college. For students who temporarily interrupted their studies, the statement makes it easier for them to return to school because it gives an accurate picture of their learning achievement. But in this case, it is sometimes necessary to ensure that the competency development has been maintained. The statement is also useful for students entering the job market.

The statement of competencies facilitates transfer to other sectors, the pursuit of higher studies or entry into the job market.

The relationships to be established between the statement of competencies and other documents used to report on student learning are set out in the basic school regulation. The regulation also contains information on the recipients, the content of the statement, when the statement is issued and where the results come from.

5.2.5 Recognition of Learning Achievement

The *Education Act* recognizes the right of young people to have their learning achievement recognized. Even though this recognition is formulated differently, it corresponds to the recognition of prior learning. The *Basic school regulation for preschool, elementary and secondary school education* therefore contains provisions to this effect.

In general education in the youth sector, recognition of learning achievement does not occur to the same extent as in vocational training or general education in the adult sector. The system of equivalences is an example of the recognition of scholastic learning and many individuals have already availed themselves of it.

Increased recognition of learning achievement

Some students have already acquired learning prescribed in the education programs during workplace, volunteer or recreational activities, especially in the subject areas of languages, arts education, personal development, and information and communications technologies. It is possible to take account of such learning, when appropriate. Valuing learning acquired outside of a school setting or during extracurricular activities can only serve to increase student motivation.

The education program or any other official program as a reference for the recognition of learning achievement

However, as stated in Orientation 10, the recognition of learning achievement in general education in the youth sector must be carried out in accordance with certain principles and in a manner that takes into account the organizational possibilities and constraints of the schools and school boards. Thus, whenever recognition of learning achievement must be used, it is essential that students demonstrate their learning. The education program or any other official program will serve as a reference for the recognition of the students' learning achievement. Moreover, equally rigorous standards must apply both to the recognition of learning achievement and to the evaluation of learning for students enrolled in a given program. Evaluation procedures may, however, be adapted to the context of recognition of learning achievement.

Also, given the importance of socialization for students in elementary and secondary school, students who have already acquired learning must have opportunities to participate in classroom activities.

Chapter 6: Evaluation of Learning in General Education in the Adult Sector

6.1 Background

Evaluation of knowledge acquisition was emphasized when the Direction générale de l'éducation permanente was created.

In 1966, in order to implement the Canada-Quebec agreement of 1962 on adult education, the Ministere de l'Education created the Direction générale de l'éducation permanente. Groups of adult students were admitted in general education provided that they did not work toward the Secondary School Diploma (SSD), but instead pursued a general education sufficient for enrollment in vocational training. Continuing education consisted of courses in presecondary education and in Cycles One and Two of secondary education. Since programs of study in general education emphasized knowledge, students were evaluated according to their level of knowledge acquisition. At the time, eight examination sessions per year were available to evaluate the learning of adult students. The results were presented in terms of an expected performance standard, and the responsibility for evaluation to certify studies was assumed jointly by the Ministere de l'Education and the school boards. Two diplomas were awarded, one for Secondary IV (36 credits) and one for Secondary V (54 credits). In addition, a report card mentioning completion of Secondary III could be issued if 24 credits had been recorded.

Evaluation in a context of pedagogical customization and objective-based programs

During the 1970s, the Ministere and the school boards began developing evaluation of learning in a context of pedagogical customization and objective-based programs. Evaluation measured the degree to which terminal and intermediate objectives had been mastered. Rules specific to adult education in the areas of evaluation of learning and certification of studies were implemented, in particular, the possibility of taking an examination without having taken a course, as well as the use of secondary studies equivalency tests (SSETs). Since then, SSETs have come to be accepted in a number of settings as sufficient recognition of prior learning for work in certain fields or for admission to vocational training.

Awarding of diploma for Secondary V studies according to the requirements applicable at that time

Beginning in 1973, adult students no longer had to attend one of the eight examination sessions; they could be evaluated upon completion of their learning. General and specific criteria were established to measure a student's mastery of each objective and a minimum performance standard of 50 or 60 per cent was set. Beginning in 1982, a diploma was awarded only for Secondary V studies, according to the requirements applicable at that time.

In 1988, provisions applicable to adult education were included in the *Education Act*, and, in 1993, the first basic school regulation was officially passed. Since 1993, the applicable programs and the required evaluation materials have been updated regularly.

Perspective regarding the competency-based approach

Evaluation consistent with the competency-based approach

This policy takes account of the programs of study applicable in general education in the adult sector. As well, it is consistent with the competency-based approach that was used in updating the programs. The term "competency" means the following: the power to act, succeed and make progress by means of the effective mobilization and use of an integrated set of resources to deal with various life situations.

The learning acquisition required by the programs of study is described in terms of competencies, and is evaluated for the purpose of the certification of studies. Greater emphasis is put on evaluation to support learning. The concept of competency requires the use of a greater variety of evaluation instruments, conditions, processes and procedures at the beginning of, during and at the end of the learning, as well as for the purpose of recognizing experiential learning.

Where responsibility is shared, whether evaluation is under the responsibility of the Ministere or that of the schools and school boards, and whether it serves in the certification of studies or as support for learning, evaluation instruments and conditions must accurately reflect the complexity and diversity of the learning acquired by adults.

6.2 Specific Applications of the Orientations

Evaluation in accordance with the values of justice, equality and equity and with the orientations

Evaluation activities in general education in the adult sector are consistent with the orientations of this policy and with the fundamental values of justice, equality and equity and the three instrumental values of coherence, rigour and openness. They help establish optimal learning conditions that foster the educational success of adults based on the programs of study.

Evaluation practices must also take account of the legislative, regulatory and administrative framework applicable to adult education. Consequently, the manner of application of certain orientations is explained below.

6.2.1 General Aspects

Programs of study in general education in the adult sector are currently developed and offered as courses with a duration of multiples of 25 hours of training.

Evaluation for the purposes of certification

In the case of competency-based programs, the training takes the form of modules. This type of school organization meets the needs of adult students where other ministries are partners that purchase or sponsor educational services and specific types of training. Consequently, an examination for certification purposes is scheduled for each course in general education in the adult sector.

Evaluation for certification purposes takes place regularly, as examinations in general education may be administered by adult education centres at any time during the year. It must be carried out as soon as the teacher considers that a student meets the requirements of the programs of study. This type of evaluation is also available for the recognition of experiential learning with respect to programs of study.

Taking examinations when the teacher considers the adult to be ready

Evaluation in the context of learning integration

It should be remembered that, as set out in Orientation 1, evaluation performed during training serves as support for learning. Teachers often evaluate students spontaneously when they suggest corrections or adjust their teaching to a specific situation. Observation instruments are adapted to facilitate the judgment that the teacher must make on the results obtained and on the learning strategies used by the student. The information gathered affects the choice of enrichment and support measures or causes the teacher to adjust his or her pedagogical interventions. Evaluation activities help establish the level of learning and determine whether students are using competencies in real-life situations.

Establishing the level of learning and determining whether competencies are used

The *Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training* requires, whenever possible, that evaluation conditions and instruments be adapted to take account of student diversity and to promote better access to general education for individuals with limitations. The Ministere intends to specify the application of the exemption and derogation rules set out in the *Administrative Manual for the Certification of Studies in General Education for Adults and in Vocational Education*. These rules will, however, respect the nature of the competencies to be developed in general education and will help maintain the quality of diplomas. Moreover, evaluation situations must not include cultural references that could put certain students at a disadvantage.

Adapting instruments to take account of student diversity and of individuals with limitations

The Ministere offers the school system information meetings on evaluation methods and sessions for implementing the new evaluation materials. The active participation of the school system in these activities makes it possible to develop expertise and practices in the evaluation of learning. The activities concern competency-based programs and their effects on evaluation.

The personal learning plan

The personal learning plan is used in the adult sector. It takes account of the scholastic and experiential learning and the training needs of students. The plan leads to the selection of courses that meet their needs and that have instructional periods and steps adapted to their situation. It makes it possible to offer services suited to the desired training.

Personal learning plan to take account of students' training needs

Mobility and fluctuation of the adult student population

Evaluation services offered throughout the year

The adult student population is mobile and fluctuates primarily because of changes in the labour market; many adults alternate between work and study and therefore interrupt their studies for a period of time or study part-time during the day or evening. Cohorts such as those in general education in the youth sector—where the student population remains stable during 180 days of classes—cannot be counted on. Throughout the year, evaluation services are available in all centres. Different equivalent versions of the provincial examinations are used because they meet adults' needs better than uniform examinations while guaranteeing the rigour and validity of the evaluation of the learning prescribed by the programs.

Importance of the quality of spoken and written language

Ensuring the quality of language during evaluation activities that are integrated into the learning process

In accordance with Orientation 8, which relates to improving the student's quality of spoken and written language, the quality of language must be ensured in all courses, especially during evaluation activities that are integrated into the learning process. However, concern with the quality of language must not result in candidates failing subjects in which the abilities of the candidates meet the specific criteria. This orientation will give rise to innovative procedures, instruments and ideas.

6.2.2 Certification of Studies

Certification requirements guarantee the conditions for obtaining official certification documents such as a diploma, certificate or attestation.

Students usually take general education courses in the adult sector to obtain a Secondary School Diploma (SSD). The conditions for obtaining an SSD in the adult sector have been harmonized with those in general education in the youth sector.

The Ministere awards other certification documents in general education in the adult sector. These documents may be used by their holders to enter the job market, and may also encourage adults to pursue their secondary studies for the purpose of obtaining an SSD. These documents are as follows:

- the sociovocational integration services certificate
- the Attestation of Equivalence of Secondary Studies (AESS)
- the *General Educational Development Testing Service (GED)* diploma

6.2.3 Instruments for the Evaluation of Learning

Sharing of responsibility for developing evaluation instruments

The Ministere is not responsible for developing all measurement and evaluation instruments. It imposes examinations for certain programs and courses in order to ensure uniform evaluation conditions for certification purposes. Adult education centres are charged with producing other examinations that are developed in accordance with the definitions of the domain, thereby ensuring compliance with provincial standards.

Ministerial examinations to ensure uniform evaluation for certification purposes

Evaluation for placement purposes

Evaluation for placement purposes plays a diagnostic and preventive role. It is necessary in the adult sector whenever an adult's schooling is interrupted. Placement contributes to ensuring that adults' training needs have been correctly assessed and that pedagogical support is provided, to planning the duration of the training and to ensuring the fair allocation of limited financial resources based on the needs of the population. Placement practices are undergoing a major change of orientation within the scope of the *Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training*. Diverse pedagogical practices suited to the variety of candidate profiles must be adopted.

Change of orientation in placement practices

6.2.4 Reporting of Results

Every month, the Ministere awards Secondary School Diplomas (SSDs). Four times a year, the Ministere issues statements of learning achievement to all students, regardless of whether they are awarded an SSD.

Within the scope of the *Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training*, the Ministere intends to replace the existing statement of learning achievement with a statement of competencies. The statement of competencies will provide information on the results for each course and in the context of the recognition of scholastic or experiential learning. It will also render account of the learning level attained with respect to the programs of study. It will therefore facilitate the pursuit of the personal learning plan and give more autonomy to adults enrolled in continuing education and training.

Replacement of the statement of learning achievement with a statement of competencies

Marking

Marking must be consistent with the rules applicable to each examination administered for certification purposes. The results are dichotomous (pass/fail) or are presented as a percentage mark. A "pass" decision is made if the result is equal to or above the minimum performance standard of 60 per cent. A "fail" decision is made if the result is below the minimum performance standard. In general education in the adult sector, marks resulting from a local evaluation are not added to marks obtained on a ministerial examination. Also, the centile rank is not used to compare an individual's mark with that of a group.

6.2.5 Recognition of Experiential Learning

The recognition of experiential learning is a priority and is part of an overall strategy for implementing adult education. Recognition of experiential learning must help fulfill the requirements of lifelong learning and of lifewide learning.

The recognition of experiential learning is a principle according to which the previously developed official, unofficial and informal competencies of an adult deserve to be valued and may be recognized in relation to an education program, a program of study or an approved reference.

Taking an examination without having to take the course

The recognition of experiential learning allows adults to have their prior learning recognized regardless of where, when and how the learning took place. It relates to training content, programs and other references. It may also relate to the competencies formulated in references put forth by educational partners in Quebec and elsewhere. Examples include the tests of the General Educational Development Testing Service (GED), training offered by educational partners such as the Ministere des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration, or a reference used in other Canadian provinces and in the United States.

Experiential learning may need to be recognized for various purposes, including the awarding of SSDs, labour qualification, closer ties between adult education centres and businesses, and employer participation in continuing education and training.

Rigour is required in the context of the recognition of experiential learning.

The recognition of experiential learning requires great rigour. Pedagogically, it can help identify continuing education needs in accordance with the adult's pace of learning. The procedures and instruments used must be adapted to the various learning situations.

Instruments and services

The instruments available are numerous and varied. The following instruments are used within the scope of the *Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training*.

- The Prior Learning Examination

  The characteristics of the Prior Learning Examination (PLE)

  The Prior Learning Examination (PLE) gives an overall picture of an adult's prior learning in English as a second language. It requires fewer examination sessions and less time for the recognition of prior learning.

- The fields of generic competencies

  The fields of generic competencies are reference frameworks used for the recognition of experiential learning.

  The fields of generic competencies provide a reference framework of competencies in areas of activity specific to adults. They are used for the recognition of experiential learning. The competencies in each of the areas are drawn from life experience and are evaluated according to a specific procedure. In 2002, this reference framework began to be used more and more widely by the school boards. It allows adults to earn credits associated with optional subjects for the purpose of obtaining an SSD.

- Secondary studies equivalency tests

Adults who pass the secondary studies equivalency tests (SSETs) are awarded an Attestation of Equivalence of Secondary Studies (AESS). This attestation satisfies the requirements for admission to a number of fields in vocational training. The SSETs are used to predict whether a person is likely to succeed in one of these fields. However, these tests cannot be used when the level of language required for a field is higher than that required for the SSETs. The list of vocational training fields for which the SSETs are appropriate may be revised as needed, taking into account the Ministere's consultations with the school boards.

The Attestation of Equivalence of Secondary Studies (AESS) awarded to adults

A number of employers accept the AESS as equivalent to the SSD for hiring purposes. Passing the SSETs ensures that adults have the essential knowledge normally acquired during secondary school studies. Of course, the SSETs do not serve as prerequisites for postsecondary education leading to a Diploma of College Studies (DCS). The SSETs will gradually be phased out as other services become more effective.

- The tests of the General Educational Development Testing Service (GED)

Adoption by Quebec of GED tests that take into account the job mobility of adults

The tests of the General Educational Development Testing Service are the property of the American Council on Education and are designed for adults who have not yet completed their secondary studies. They allow adults to obtain a diploma that—especially for employment purposes—is equivalent to an SSD. The GED tests have a good reputation in North America. By adopting these tests, Quebec will be able to offer services adapted to the job mobility of adults.

The GED tests are offered in French, English and Spanish in the United States and the other Canadian provinces, and will be available shortly in Quebec. There are five GED tests that correspond approximately to Secondary V in the following areas: language arts writing, language arts reading, social studies, science, and mathematics. It should be noted, however, that a fair amount of content in Quebec's programs of study that is compulsory for the awarding of an SSD is not covered by the tests.

- Record of learning

The record of learning is a reception and referral instrument.

The record of learning will not be used as an evaluation instrument for the recognition of experiential learning. It will be a reception and referral instrument for the recognition of prior scholastic and experiential learning. A methodical inventory of adults' prior learning will become possible, thereby facilitating access to the recognition of experiential learning. Each adult's personal learning plan will be clearer and better adapted. The record of learning will help identify bridges between past training and the training desired. It will serve as a reference tool by facilitating, among other things, the organization of customized training for the purpose of meeting the demand for purchases and sponsorships of training by different partners and ministries.

Chapter 7: Evaluation of Learning in Vocational Training

7.1 Background

Integration of vocational training in comprehensive schools

After the creation of the Ministere de l'Éducation in 1963, comprehensive schools were set up and trade schools that offered vocational training disappeared. At that time, vocational training for adults was governed by a different basic school regulation than vocational training for young people.

Evaluation of knowledge acquisition

Until the 1970s, vocational training programs of study were based on knowledge acquisition. Consequently, students were evaluated on the acquisition of knowledge prescribed by a program. The results were presented in relation to the performance of the group and the responsibility for evaluation to certify studies was shared by the Ministere de l'Education and the school boards. Studies were certified by the same diploma as general education, with mention of a vocational specialty.

Evaluation of the mastery of specified objectives

During the 1970s, objective-based programs appeared in vocational training, in both the adult and youth sectors. Evaluation focused on the mastery of objectives specified in the programs of study.

In the youth sector, the Ministere imposed a single examination in pencil/paper format that consisted of multiple-choice questions. The pass mark was 60 per cent. The ministerial examination was administered at the end of the program and represented half of the mark counting toward the diploma. The other half of the mark was the school board's responsibility.

In vocational training in the adult sector, multidimensional evaluation was used. General and specific criteria were established to measure a student's mastery of each objective and a minimum performance standard was set. A pass/fail decision could be made using various evaluation methods, including the direct measurement of a finished product or the direct observation of a student's performance.

Evaluation of competencies

In 1986, the Ministere undertook a reform in vocational training that involved replacing the objective-based programs with competency-based programs. This led to new types of ministerial diplomas, the Secondary School Vocational Diploma (SSVD—now known as the Diploma of Vocational Studies, DVS) and the Attestation of Vocational Specialization (AVS). Young people and adults had access to the same programs and were awarded the same diplomas.

Publication of the General Evaluation Guide

To support the implementation of the reform, the Ministere offered the school system information meetings on evaluation methods and sessions for implementing the new evaluation materials. It also made available the *General Evaluation Guide* and various examination development guides.

The active participation of the school system in these activities, combined with the funding of training and professional development for teachers and educational institutions, made it possible to develop expertise and practices in the evaluation of learning.

Integration of young people and adults in vocational training

In 2000, the basic school regulations for vocational training in the youth and adult sectors were combined. The goal was to better focus training on labour needs by taking into account the specific needs of the regions and to include the recognition of prior learning in the definition of educational options.

Contribution of the workplace and educational institutions

Partners in the workplace and educational institutions contribute, along with the Ministere, to identifying the competencies to be included in the programs of study.

Harmonization of the programs of study

Most of the vocational training programs have been harmonized, that is, the similarities and continuity among these programs have been identified to allow for the recognition of competencies. Special attention is also paid to opportunities for enrollment in technical education at the college level.

Diversified program offerings

Students—whether they be young people or adults—may choose a suitable program from over a hundred programs leading to a diploma (Diploma of Vocational Studies or Attestation of Vocational Specialization). Educational institutions may also offer training services to adults and employers that do not lead to a ministerial diploma. The Attestation of Vocational Education (AVE), which is under the responsibility of educational institutions, has been recognized since 1995. Institutions must comply with the values, orientations and principles applicable to vocational training that are described in this policy.

Vocational training is not currently undergoing reform because the 1986 reform allowed evaluation practices to be implemented that were in line with the competency-based approach. However, given the diversity of programs of study and clienteles, as well as the introduction of amendments to the Education Act in 1997, certain changes will be required in the evaluation of competencies. The *Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training* will also have an impact on the practice of evaluation for the recognition of prior learning.

To meet these needs and keep all stakeholders informed, the Secteur de la formation professionnelle et technique et de la formation continue of the Ministere de l'Education explains in this policy the applications of the orientations that must guide the evaluation of competencies in vocational training.

7.2 Specific Applications of the Orientations

Evaluation of learning in vocational training is based on the values and orientations presented in Part I of this policy. Evaluation practices must also take into account the sector's characteristics. Therefore, the manner of application of certain orientations will be explained in the next section. Specificities concerning the certification of studies, instruments, the reporting of results, and the recognition of prior learning will also be presented.

7.2.1 General Aspects

Definition of "competency"

In vocational training, programs of study are divided into modules. Each module describes an operational objective aimed at developing a competency that is defined as follows: the power to act, succeed and make progress, which allows a student to satisfactorily carry out occupational tasks or activities and which is based on organized learning (knowledge, abilities in diverse fields, perception and attitudes).

Conformity with the program of study

To respect the values of justice, equality and equity and comply with Orientation 4, all the competencies described in a program must be evaluated. To demonstrate that a competency has been attained, students must satisfy the performance or participation criteria set out in the program of study according to the specified evaluation conditions.

Evaluation at the service of learning

During the training period, however, evaluation must be at the service of learning, as specified in Orientation 1. Teachers often evaluate spontaneously when they suggest corrections to students or when they adapt their teaching to a particular situation. When these actions are taken in the course of learning, they are consistent with Orientation 2 and with section 19 of the *Education Act*, which states that the teacher "is entitled…to select the means of evaluating the progress of students so as to examine and assess continually and periodically the needs and achievement of objectives of every student entrusted to his [or her] care."

Evaluation to support learning is planned by the teacher. Evaluation activities make it possible to verify the level of competency development during the basic learning phase and during the practice of complex aspects of the competency as well as to verify that the competency can be transferred to a similar situation.

Evaluation of results obtained and learning strategies

Teachers use observation instruments adapted to the objective pursued, that is, the evaluation of theory, of the student's participation, of the process used or of the product obtained. The evaluation enables the teacher to make a judgment on the results obtained as well as on the learning strategies used by the student. The information gathered must be sufficient to help the teacher decide on the actions to be taken, for example, offering support or enrichment measures to the student, or adjusting teaching practices.

Evaluation of elements of the competency or of the competency as a whole

Evaluation in the course of learning is integrated into the pedagogical act; it may be carried out at any time and may focus on elements of the competency or on the competency as a whole. This flexibility allows the teacher to verify a competency at different stages of its acquisition, and emphasize one or more simple or complex elements.

Adaptation of evaluation conditions and instruments, while maintaining the same requirements

Whether evaluation takes place during learning or serves to certify studies, compliance with Orientation 3 requires that, whenever possible, evaluation conditions and instruments be adapted to take into account student diversity. This means that evaluation procedures are modified based on the type of clientele (e.g. students with handicaps) or the evaluation context (e.g. recognition of prior learning), while maintaining the same requirements for all.

Evaluation situations must not include cultural references that could put certain students at a disadvantage. Also, learning situations allow students to relate to their social environment.

To promote better access to vocational training for individuals with limitations, the Ministere intends to specify the application of the exemption and derogation rules set out in the *Administrative Manual for the Certification of Studies in General Education for Adults and in Vocational Education*. These rules will, however, respect the nature of the competencies to be developed in vocational training and will help maintain the quality of diplomas.

Evaluation practices that encourage students to play an active role fall into the category of support for learning and reflect Orientation 5. These practices help students to no longer perceive evaluation as an activity carried out solely by the teacher at the end of a learning period, but also as something from which they can learn through their participation. This practice allows students to become more aware of what is expected of them at different times in the learning process, to verify whether the learning strategies they are using are effective and to plan, if need be, other ways of doing things. It also gives students numerous opportunities to engage in discussion with their teacher and classmates.

The focus must therefore be on the involvement and accountability of the students in their training. At the beginning and throughout the learning period, students must be informed of the results and the expected behaviours. They must also be made aware of the criteria that will be used to make a judgment on their participation or their competency acquisition.

Ability to correct own behaviours and performance

In exercising their "occupation," students will be required to make judgments regarding their own work results. Helping students develop the ability to evaluate their own behaviours and performance and to make the necessary adjustments is one of the pedagogical aims presented in the vocational training programs of study.

The responsibility of the educational institution and the teacher

Orientation 6 indicates the responsibilities of the different educational partners. In a context of collaboration with partners, such as training activities in the workplace or work-study programs, teachers must gather information on a student's competency development from the practicum supervisor at the host company so that the student can be provided with constructive feedback.

Support provided to teachers by the educational institution

The teacher is responsible for evaluation activities that serve to recognize a competency. The teacher's judgment must be based on personal observations and on the validated information provided by the host company. The teacher thus plays a major and essential role in the evaluation of learning, whether during the learning, in dealings with partners or in evaluation to certify studies. The educational institution also performs an important role because it helps its teachers become familiar with the programs of study, plan learning activities and carry out evaluation practices that are consistent with the values and orientations of this policy.

The quality of spoken and written language

Orientation 8, which deals with spoken and written language, also applies to vocational training. This concern is taken into account in the programs of study. Competencies focusing on communication, which are included in most of the programs, incorporate various aspects of communication and provide an excellent opportunity to emphasize the quality of language.

Use of appropriate terminology

In all of the evaluation instruments that it develops, the Ministere is committed to using French and English terms that are appropriate and recognized by the trade or occupation. Concern for the quality of language must also be demonstrated in the evaluation tools prepared by the educational institutions and in everyday dealings with students.

7.2.2 Certification of Studies

The Ministere indicates in Orientation 9 that evaluation of learning leading to the certification of studies must uphold the value accorded by society to official certification documents.

Certification documents that provide access to the job market

The state certifies secondary school studies in vocational training by awarding the Diploma of Vocational Studies (DVS) or the Attestation of Vocational Specialization (AVS). The DVS and the AVS provide access to the job market.

On the educational institution's recommendation, the Ministere also awards the Attestation of Vocational Education (AVE), which leads to the practice of a semiskilled occupation. A school board may develop and implement a short-term program that leads to the carrying out of specialized tasks related to a job. This type of training leads to the awarding by the school board of a Skills Training Certificate (STC), which is not covered in the Basic Vocational Training Regulation. These two types of programs are competency-based, and the orientations of this policy are applicable.

Each program competency must be evaluated.

Each program competency must be the focus of evaluation for certification purposes. This evaluation uses examinations or participation requirements, depending on the target objective. Evaluation in the course of learning to provide students with assistance must not be used to determine the result of the final evaluation in a course. More than one competency may be evaluated at the same time, providing that each is certified separately.

Meaningful tasks that integrate the essential elements of a competency

In conformity with Orientation 4, evaluation for certification purposes must therefore focus on all the important aspects of the competency. The evaluation situation must be sufficiently complex and resemble a real work situation as closely as possible. The acquisition of a competency is evaluated using meaningful tasks that integrate all the important aspects of the competency.

The Ministere establishes training equivalences.

Moreover, in the case of the recognition of equivalences, an individual may have a competency recognized without having to be evaluated. The Ministere establishes equivalences among the vocational training program competencies when they are developed. It also indicates the competencies that could be judged equivalent in a vocational training program or a technical education program.

An individual may request to take a compulsory examination in order to be granted credits without taking the corresponding course or courses. It is, however, up to the authorized institution to determine the individual's level of preparation for the examination and to consider the request, taking into account pedagogical requirements and organizational constraints.

The criteria and the minimum performance standard are predetermined for each competency.

Evaluation to certify a competency is criterion-referenced. The Ministere sets the criteria that will be used to measure the acquisition of each competency. These criteria are intended to ensure that the essential aspects of the competency are acquired. The minimum performance standard is set separately for each examination, by taking into account the complexity of the task and the importance of the evaluation criteria.

Evaluation that is individual

The acquisition of a competency cannot be evaluated by comparing the results obtained by different students, but only by judging the conformity of each student's results with the evaluation criteria set by the Ministere. Evaluation for certification purposes is always individual, even if the situation calls for teamwork.

Marking and the expression of results are dichotomous.

In vocational training, marking as well as the expression of the result of an evaluation are dichotomous. The student's result is expressed with a "pass" or "fail", depending on whether the minimum performance standard has been met.

A "fail" decision may only be made regarding a student who has undergone an evaluation for certification purposes. Dropping a course or failing to attend an examination cannot justify such a decision.

Students in initial training have the right to retake an examination certifying a competency after having failed the examination. To avail themselves of this right, students must demonstrate that they have done the necessary remedial work. The result obtained on the retake examination will become the official result.

The Minister may impose examinations.

In addition to setting the evaluation criteria for each competency, the Ministere may impose examinations to uphold the value that society accords to the official certification documents awarded by the Ministere.

Certain DVSs allow students to enter directly into college. The conditions are determined by the Minister according to the training received at the secondary school level. These programs are harmonized with the technical education programs and allow for continuity of training.

DVS, a prerequisite for college education

7.2.3 Instruments for the Evaluation of Learning

In accordance with section 19 of the Education Act, teachers are responsible for developing evaluation instruments used to support learning. Responsibility for instruments used to certify studies is shared by the Ministere de l'Education and the educational institution.

Shared responsibility of the teacher, the educational institution and the Ministere

The Ministere is responsible for setting the criteria to be used for evaluating the attainment of a competency. To this end, it seeks the collaboration of occupational specialists, either from the teaching profession or the workplace. The Ministere ensures that the competency-based approach is used and that the most important elements are selected. It also seeks to obtain consensus among the teaching specialists by asking a representative sampling of individuals to give their opinion on the criteria selected.

The Ministere seeks to obtain consensus regarding evaluation criteria.

To support the application of these criteria, the Ministere proposes an evaluation situation suited to each competency. Whenever possible, the evaluation situation must place students in the same circumstances as those in which they would find themselves in a workplace.

The criteria selected for certification purposes are then presented in the form of tables for each competency. They are published as Tables of Specifications or, when they include elements that support pedagogical planning, as Analysis and Planning Tables.

Tables of specifications or analysis and planning tables

This concern for accurately reflecting the work context must influence the examinations that the Ministere prepares and imposes. These examinations are developed in collaboration with teaching specialists. Hypothetical situations, chosen from various possibilities, must require students to use the different facets of the competency, that is, knowledge, behaviours and know-how.

Ministerial examinations developed by teaching specialists

As with the evaluation criteria, the Ministere asks a representative sampling of teachers to give their opinion on the quality of the examinations. In this way, the Ministere verifies that each examination accurately represents the competency's essential components and that it is clear and understood by all in the same way.

The educational institution is responsible for developing the evaluation instruments for certification purposes that the Ministere does not itself produce. The values and orientations set out in this policy and recognized by all stakeholders in the evaluation of learning serve as references in the exercise of this responsibility.

The institution is responsible for most of the examinations.

7.2.4 Reporting of Results

Students enrolled in vocational training periodically receive from the Ministere a statement that indicates the results obtained in the evaluation of all the modules. When minors pursue their education in both general education and vocational training simultaneously, the parents of students are entitled to receive the report cards and other types of communication provided for in general education in the youth sector.

The statement of marks is issued periodically.

Statement of competencies

A statement of competencies indicates all of a program's competencies and is issued to students who earn a DVS or an AVS.

Students enrolled in a program leading to an Attestation of Vocational Education (AVE) are issued a statement of competencies for semiskilled occupations by the Ministere as soon as the educational institution attests that a "pass" decision has been made. This statement is updated when other results are sent.

A statement of competencies transmitted periodically would make it possible to attest to the learning that a student has successfully completed. Students who change educational paths or adults who seek to have prior learning recognized would benefit from the official recognition of acquired competencies without having to complete the program.

7.2.5 Recognition of Prior Learning

The right to the recognition of prior learning

All persons have a right to have their prior learning recognized by society, regardless of where or how the learning has been acquired or the circumstances involved. The learning derived from various experiences is recognized and not the experiences themselves. However, it is up to the individual to prove that a competency has been acquired.

The recognition of prior learning must ensure that a person does not have to take training for learning that he or she has already acquired. Also, prior learning should not have to be recognized a second time if it has already been evaluated rigorously and certified officially. It is up to the educational institution to examine training equivalences and determine the validity of the certification. It is, however, the applicant's responsibility to provide all the documents required to recognize previous training.

The recognition of occupational competencies must be accessible to all. After studying the file, however, the educational institution will determine whether it is appropriate for an individual to undergo evaluation leading to the recognition of prior learning.

The program of study is the only reference used in awarding a DVS or AVS.

A vocational training program is the only reference recognized for the awarding of a DVS or AVS by the Ministere. A competency developed within the scope of another reference may be recognized for certification purposes, providing that it corresponds to a competency in a program. The performance to be attained to have the competency recognized is that required for entry into the job market, in accordance with the program of study.

Rigorous, reliable and flexible evaluation

Evaluation for the recognition of prior learning must be carried out in a rigorous and reliable manner. The judgment regarding mastery of the competency must be well-supported and justified, and quality evaluation instruments must be used to ensure that the value accorded by society to the diploma is upheld and that the requirements of equity are complied with. Organizational models must, however, create conditions that foster the taking into account of the principles on which the recognition of prior learning is based. The school system and companies may become partners in organizing the evaluation of prior learning and in recognizing competencies.

Identification of any training that remains to be completed

The recognition of prior learning is considered part of continuing education and training. The process for recognizing prior learning leads to the identification of any training that remains to be completed. The uncompleted training may relate to all or part of a competency. The person may then complete the training in a school setting or elsewhere. The educational institution helps the person to select the methods or means most appropriate to his or her situation.

The *Cadre general de la reconnaissance des acquis en formation professionnelle et technique* describes the concept, instruments and process related to the recognition of previously acquired competencies.

Conclusion

In adopting this policy on the evaluation of learning, the Ministere de l'Education recognizes that evaluation is a major component of the curriculum in general education in the youth sector, general education in the adult sector and vocational training. The ministerial vision presented here places evaluation at the centre of learning. This constitutes a powerful factor in helping students learn and supporting teachers as they guide students in their learning.

By issuing an evaluation policy for the three sectors of education, the Ministere clearly indicates its choice of a unified vision for evaluation. The Ministere does, however, acknowledge that each sector has specific characteristics.

Because the responsibility for evaluation of learning is shared by the educational institutions—which are the main players—and by the Ministere de l'Education, it is especially important that all collaborate in establishing conditions conducive to the educational success of all students in Quebec, in particular, by utilizing the potential that evaluation of learning offers.

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